ORIGINAL

LOVE-LETTERS,

BETWEEN

A LADY OF QUALITY

AND

A PERSON OF INFERIOR STATION.

"Love, like Death, levels all Distinctions." ADDISON.

VOL. II.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY J. REA, FOR

MESSRS. MONCRIEFFE, R. CROSS, EXSHAW, WILSON, WALKER, JENKIN, BURNET, BEATTY, WHITE BURTON, BYRNE, CASH, MARCHBANK, HEERY, AND W. PORTER.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

ORIGINAL
LOVE-LETTERS,
&c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

To Mr. — — — —.

I HAVE, my friend, a propoſal to make to you, which is, that if you will never write to me when you are in a low-ſpirited humour, I will promiſe never to anſwer your letters in an angry one—The farewel you ſent me on your departure from town, which was written in the moſt unreaſonable and provoking dejection of the former, deprived me of all ſerious reflection, and irritated me to ſend an anſwer

written in all the diſpleaſure of the latter. Though you well deſerve all that flowed from my pen on the occaſion, I am now ſorry that any thing which bears the marks of my indignation ſhould reach you, as I fear it may have done, juſt at the moment when a few unruffled hours are abſolutely neceſſary to ſettle yourſelf in ſome degree of comfort, and to commence the regimen which your phyſician has preſcribed for you. I now wiſh, moſt ſincerely, that I had delayed ſending it till I had received your charming letter from *Speenham Hill*, when I might ſay, in the true ſtrain *of an Hibernian ſlip of the tongue*, that I ſhould not have ſent it at all. However, your *Berkſhire* ſpirits ſatisfy me, and I truſt and devoutly hope that they will not loſe their tone on your breathing the Glouceſterſhire air.

Did you meet Chaucer's ſhade? and did it not ſmile upon you? I know ſomething

thing of *Mr. Andrews:* he has a ſhare of your enthuſiaſm, and if, by any chance, you had found yourſelf at his breakfaſt, I am certain that he would not have been perſuaded to have parted with you when it was over. But I am in haſte to greet you at the Wells, where I ſhall ſuppoſe you to be ſettled to your ſatisfaction, and that you have already entered upon the plan of conduct ſo neceſſary to mine. Live, if poſſible, on horſeback; chuſe the high grounds for your excurſions; ſometimes croſs the river, and ſtretch along the Downs which preſent themſelves ſo beautifully towards the *Severn*, where the ſea breezes, brought up by that river's flowing tide, will chear your ſpirits, and create an appetite for your boiled chicken.

I do not know any place where there is a more varied ſcenery, or where the ſame ſcenes, from common, natural cauſes, become more varied, than in your envi-

rons. When your preſent ſymptoms leave you, which Doctor Elliot expects will ſoon be the caſe, extend your peregrinations, and viſit whatever may be worth viſiting in the neighbourhood. *King's Weſton* is a common ride,—*Lord Botetourt's at Stoke* is not very diſtant, but you muſt not forget to make a little journey to *Piersfield*, the ſeat of Mr. *Morris:* this is one of the fineſt places in the kingdom—it poſſeſſes the united charms of *Claude Lorrain* and *Salvator Roſa*, heightened by the brilliant and undulating verdure of Engliſh lawns. But I muſt add, that the beauties of Piersfield are emulated by the hoſpitable virtues of its maſter; and it is, perhaps, the only place in the kingdom, which every one may ſee at their leiſure, and be politely attended, without the miſerable tax ſo univerſally and ſo diſagreeably levied by ſervants, gardeners, and park-keepers. I know an intimate friend of Mr. Morris's

ſiſter,

ſiſter, and if I can contrive, *par hazard*, to procure you a letter to this gentleman, you will ſee his charming domain under the advantage of his ſociety, and with all the comforts of his elegant hoſpitality. I would alſo recommend a ride to Berkeley Caſtle; a place which hiſtory has made intereſting, though, when I ſaw it, my whole frame ſhuddered at the idea of royal blood ſhed within its walls.

I am aſſured that all will ſoon be well with you, if you will but act fairly by yourſelf, and pay an effectual attention to the anxious counſels of thoſe who moſt ſincerely intereſt themſelves in whatever concerns you. Mrs. ——— writes to you by this poſt; ſhe loves you with a mother's affection. With equal zeal, we have aſſumed our different occupations. Your bodily infirmities are the objects of her care; your mind's diſeaſe belongs to me. I have ventured upon a

difficult undertaking; *mais ceux, qui riſquent rien, gagnent rien.* If, however, by our mutual care, furthered by your own reſolution, both your complaints ſhould be removed. I may have cauſe for tranſcendent triumph, but, believe me, the exultation of it will be loſt in the pleaſure of ſeeing ſuch a man as you are, reſtored to health and to yourſelf.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

To — — — — — — — —.

PHILOSOPHERS have continually aſſerted the advantage that an humble name and lowly ſtate poſſeſſes over great renown and exalted ſtation. I am, at this moment, a moſt devout convert to that opinion; for my inſignificance has preſerved me

me from no ſmall ſhare of ſerious affliction. Your firſt letter would have made me deſperate, but it did not find me till it was accompanied with the ſecond, which at once calmed the riſing agitation. If I had been of ſufficient conſequence to have had my arrival trumpeted forth, your ſevere lecture would have met me on my firſt viſit to the ſpring, and have turned the nectar of health into a draught of bitterneſs. But I was not known, and, fortunately for me, the antidote accompanied the poiſon. Health already favours me with her ſmiles; ſhe has heard your prayers for me, for I have ſcarce offered up any for myſelf. The ſymptom, which ſeemed ſo alarming to you, has entirely diſappeared. My cough begins to give way, and is not followed by any ſanguinnary diſcharge. But of theſe things I have written a particular account to Mrs. ———, who will ſatisfy your amiable curioſity

curioſity by a communication of it. I have other matters to tell you.

When I prepare myſelf to write to you, my corporeal nature ſeems to quit me at once, and I am all ſoul: the immortal annihilates the mortal part of me when I addreſs myſelf to your celeſtial virtue. My nature conforms to the object of its adoration, and lays aſide the garb of infirmity for the common and baſer purpoſes of exiſtence. All time appears to be loſt to me which is not employed in obeying your commands, in converſing with you as I now do, or contemplating the unmerited felicity of being protected and cheriſhed by you. Hence it is that I have avoided every kind of communication with the viſitants of this place, except an unhappy family who live in the ſame houſe with me. I aſſociate with them, becauſe I am certain, that, if you knew them, I ſhould receive your

your expreſs command to tender thoſe little offices which they receive from me. I did not expect that it would be my lot to afford conſolation to others, and here I am in the midſt of a domeſtic ſociety who are, all of them, more unhappy than myſelf. This afflicted and afflicting groupe conſiſts of a tender mother, with her darling ſon, a moſt promiſing young man of twenty-two years of age, who is in a hopeleſs ſtage of a conſumption. An amiable daughter, four years younger than her brother, is a beautiful and melancholy figure in the piece; but another remains behind which affects me more than all the reſt, and completes the ſcene of affliction. This is a moſt elegant young lady, charming beyond the common lot of woman, and ſuperior to all her ſex that I have ſeen, except one, whom I ſhall not name. She was deſtined to be the young man's bride; but death has forbid the banns, and awaits his

his victim. Unhappy maid! ſhe loves, and ſees the object of her virtuous paſſion ſinking from her into the grave. With a Veſtal's patience and adoration does ſhe watch the expiring flame of his exiſtence: with the moſt affecting attention does ſhe ſit by his ſide, to ſmooth the pillow that ſupports him, and wipe the drops from his brow. She beholds his fate in ſilent ſorrow, concealed ſometimes by a gentle ſmile, to hide her trouble from the object of it. The mother is glad to quit the chamber for a moment, to wring her hands and lift her eyes to Heaven. The ſiſter is loſt in the offices due to all, and which ſhe, with the moſt winning tenderneſs, pays to all. She told me the night was ſufficient for her tears, and I believe her pillow is often wet with ſhowers of them. The young gentleman himſelf is the leaſt diſturbed of any, and the leaſt to be pitied. He alone is inſenſible to his approaching diſ-

ſolution

ſolution, and talks as if he had an age of life before him; though, in another week, I fear, he will become a clod of the valley. I was preſent when an old family ſervant, being told by his miſtreſs that her ſon's caſe was now without hopes, hinted reſpectfully at the propriety of his receiving the laſt ceremonies of the Church. "Alas! what is the reparation of a laſt hour for a bad life?" replied ſhe to the old man; "but you, who have attended him from his cradle, and will ſoon follow him to his grave, you well know that his life wants none: nor ſhall the tranquillity of thoſe few days that remain to him be diſturbed, nor ſhall his departing ſpirits be troubled with ſolemnities, that prove a fallacious refuge to the bad, and which your poor maſter's virtues, for he was virtuous beyond example, do not demand. 'There has not been a moment of his life," added ſhe, in a tone of painful exultation, "ſince I brought

brought him into it, wherein he was not in a ſtate to render his ſoul, without fear, to the God who gave it." The old man's ſorrow now flowed from his aged eyes——he wiſhed that he could yield his life to ſave his maſter's, and added another figure to the family of affliction.

Is not this a melancholy ſcene? But how much the miſery of it would be heightened, if the young man were ſenſible of his condition! By his particular deſire, I accompanied him this morning in his uſual airing. A very ſlow courſe round the Downs is as much as he can bear. The ſun ſhone bright, and Nature looked uncommonly gay. The ſurrounding ſcenes charmed his ſpirits into ſomewhat of animation, and he gave me a a moſt pleaſing deſcription of his country ſeat, the elegant variety of his garden, the verdure of his vallies, and the craggy beauties that form their boundary: nor did

did the lovely fair one, whom he has deſtined to be the queen of his little rural kingdom, paſs without her ſhare of praiſe; he ſpoke of her charms in the moſt melting terms of fond affection, and he apoſtrophiſed her virtues. I could ſcarce ſupport the converſation—But when he invited me to accompany him on his return home, and to be preſent at his nuptials, it ſo affected me that I was obliged to make a ſudden pretence to quit the chaiſe for a few minutes to recover myſelf—

> No more his woods nor vales ſhall he behold,
> Nor friends, nor native home!——

He poſſeſſes all thoſe ſymptoms of mental eaſe and pleaſing expectation, which you mention as the merciful accompaniments of his approaching end. If, inſtead of looking upon every thing around him with a complacent ſatisfaction, as objects which he would ſoon be in a capacity

city to enjoy, he ſhould perceive the curtain that is ſo ſoon to drop between him and them for ever—if, inſtead of obſerving with a calm delight upon the brilliant ſcene of Nature that preſents itſelf before him, he ſhould dart an angry glance towards the ſun, and defy its rays to illuminate the dark abode to which he was haſtening—if, inſtead of looking to the lovely Amelia as the ſource of all his future joy, he ſhould feel the moment approaching that would tear him from her for ever—if, inſtead of the bridal-bed, which his eager imagination adorns with roſes, he ſhould ſee the winding-ſheet that is weaving for him—if, inſtead of being bleſſed with the hopes, however fallacious, of poſſeſſing the charming object of his affection, he ſhould look forwards even to the bare, but accurſed poſſibility of her forgetting him in the arms of another ——Gracious God of Heaven! thy goodneſs is infinite beyond man's feeble thought

thought or comprehenſion—at no period of my miſerable life have I been inſenſible to it—but never, never did I feel it as I ought till this hour! May the ſenſe of thy mercies, which now poſſeſs my heart, never quit it for a moment, till death has raiſed me to the capacity of feeling them more, and knowing them better!

LETTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

To Mr — — —.

I WRITE in anſwer to your two laſt letters, and our correſpondence will now aſſume its uſual regularity. I moſt ſincerely rejoice at that change in your conſtitution, of which you inform me. I have ſeen, with equal ſatisfaction, the particular account of your amendment, which

which you have written for the inſpection of your phyſician, who already cries victory, and recommends nothing more to perfect your cure, than the continuance of your preſent regimen through the ſummer, with the due precautions againſt taking cold, and, above all, for all depends upon it, the preſerving an equal, tranquil, and unanxious temper of mind, ſo neceſſary to all health, but ſo immediately requiſite to yours.

To aid you in this laſt and moſt eſſential part of your preſcription, I muſt inſiſt upon your giving over that ſtrain of complaint, which ſo often infuſes itſelf into ſome part or other of your letters. You deſcribe the pangs of abſence with all the whining nonſenſe of a boyiſh paſſion. Have done with this extravagance, I beſeech you; write to me, for the future, in the rational, though, if it ſo pleaſes you, in the animated language of friendſhip.

friendſhip. Away with your heroics, and your pathetics, when I am the ſubject of your thoughts, and ſoar not above the regions of right reaſon and common ſenſe, which, if I know any thing of the matter, are but different expreſſions for one and the ſame thing.

I do not affect to be ignorant of what you have taken ſuch pains to inform me; but, be aſſured, my friend, that I will act conſiſtently with my own principles, and what I conceive to be neceſſary to my own character. Various circumſtances, of which I alone can be the proper judge, and which it would be needleſs to communicate to you, abſolutely require our preſent ſeparation, and may for ſome length of time continue to require it; but the day will come, I truſt, when the exiſting obſtacles may be no more. I may wiſh, perhaps, for the arrival of that period as well as you; but I ſhall wait with a becoming

a becoming patience till I can welcome it as I ought. I muſt beg of you to adopt a ſimilar patience; and, if common entreaties will not avail, for your own ſake, I implore you to exerciſe it for mine. But wherefore do I humiliate myſelf in requeſting favour, when I have, now at leaſt, no common right to command obedience? I ſhall ſay no more upon a ſubject whereon I may have already ſaid too much; but, having undertaken the cure of your fickly mind, it became me to preſcribe what I had been induced to think might prove a remedy for the diſeaſes of it. I forbid you, however, on pain of my real diſpleaſure, to take any opportunity of continuing this ſubject, or even hinting to me, in any future letters, what, perhaps, I have more than hinted to you. It is ſufficient that I have thought proper to make a declaration which I believe to be eſſential to your repoſe—I have not taken this ſtep without

due

due reflection, and I hope it will not bring upon me either ſhame or repentance. However, my friend, here I muſt command you to let the matter reſt: it is for me alone to judge when the ſubject may be renewed.

I like the hiſtory of your domeſtic arrangement; but I truſt that you make very little or no application to the apothecary's ſhop. Your *materia medica* is that of ſimple Nature; milk, roots, ripe fruit, and light meats, &c. with air and gentle exerciſe on horſeback. Medicinal drugs would be as obnoxious to your caſe as they may be beneficial to many others. I know that ſuch inſtructions are already given by one whoſe profound medical knowledge and extenſive experience command the moſt implicit ſubmiſſion: but I repeat the advice, becauſe it is ſo good that it cannot be too often repeated; and who knows but I may be vain enough to

imagine

imagine that my letters may be read with more attention than your phyſician's preſcription, and find a more willing obedience?

I paſs over the pleaſure I have enjoyed in accompanying your charming rides; and I ſcarce have time to thank you for your obſervations on the moral effect of Nature's varied beauties, when regarded by the contemplative ſpirit of a reaſonable being. I cannot ſuffer theſe pleaſing ſubjects to ſtop me a moment longer from applauding the tender concern you have ſhewn, and the kind offices you have been able to employ, for the amiable family whoſe ſituation and afflictions you deſcribe but too well. What a ſcene, my friend, for your tender ſpirit! What an office for your tender heart! Gracious Heavens! in what a world of viciſſitudes do we live! And to what a train of miſeries are we ſubject!

Man's

Man's feeble race what ills await!
Labour and penury, the racks of pain,
Diſeaſe, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And death, ſad refuge from the ſtorms of Fate!

You do not give me a ray of hope for the amiable young gentleman's recovery: I perceive, indeed, that you have none to communicate. However, if this letter arrives in time, I deſire that it may convey a warning to prepare you every moment for his end, even at the inſtant when his ſpirits are moſt chearful, and a ſudden reanimation of his frame would deceive you almoſt into hopes of his recovery. I ſuſtained a ſhock of this nature when I was at the Hot-wells, the impreſſion whereof is now renewed. I met a young lady of my acquaintance, in her airing upon the Downs, as I was going with a party to paſs the day at King's Weſton, and my enquiries after her health were anſwered with a degree of chearfulneſs and animation that brought to my mind

her former ſtate of health and ſpirits: the circumſtance gave a new flow to mine, and I promiſed to call upon her in the evening. Immediately, on my return, I hurried to her lodgings, and finding no one in the room where ſhe uſed to receive me, I rapped gently at her chamber-door, when a voice bid me come in. I entered —but what think you were my feelings, when, inſtead of my friend chearful as I had ſeen her but a few hours before, I found her corpſe in the hands of thoſe who were employed to conſign it to its laſt home; for ſhe had died about an hour after I had ſeen her ſo chearful in the morning. I fainted almoſt immediately, and was carried home in agonizing hyſterics. There is, however, an awful leſſon for you to learn from the particular circumſtances around you. If, my friend, you eſteem it ſo great a bleſſing that the poor young man ſhould not perceive the melancholy fate which is hanging over him,

what

what can you think of thoſe who lament misfortunes that do not threaten them?—If fancied happineſs be a bleſſing, how great muſt be the curſe of fancied calamity! Go on, however, in your work of conſolation, and proſper—my poor applauſe waits upon the deed; and your own heart will more than confirm my feeble approbation. You cannot fail to anticipate the final reward of thoſe who comfort the afflicted.——Adieu!

LETTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

To ———————.

IT was night—the mantle of darkneſs had overſpread the world—nought was heard but the daſhing of waves on the ſhore, and the howling of wolves in the

foreſt—a white ſpot at length appears in the eaſt, and ſpreads into a milky dawn: the hills are black beneath it, and a duſky hue is over all the plain. But ſoon the glow of morning appears, and tips with ruddy ſtreaks the tops of the mountains. The birds of the grove begin their ſong; the beaſts of the field lift up their voices; the flowers raiſe their languid heads from the earth; for the darting rays proclaim the coming God---And, behold, he makes his triumphant entry into our hemiſphere, amid the joy and acclamation of univerſal Nature!

It was night with me---the clouds of darkneſs overwhelmed me, and I deſpaired of returning day, when you aroſe and beamed your favour around me. It was ſurely a bleſſed hour; yes, it was the hour which will give a warm and glowing colour to my future days. My real life began with my knowledge of you---your ſmiles

ſmiles alone can brighten the ſcene---your frowns alone can darken and obſcure it---You command the elements of my fate---this is the office of celeſtial power, and mercy is its darling attribute——But I have done.

In erring againſt your expreſs command, I have nothing to plead but the turbulent joys of my own heart, and that I will err no more. It is impoſſible for me to addreſs you, in anſwer to your laſt invaluable letter, without giving vent to the exalted happineſs with which it inſpired me. My lyre, no longer crowned with cypreſs, but adorned with roſes, will return no other ſounds but thoſe of exalted love, and boundleſs gratitude. O gentle, pure, eternal Love!---But I have done---Forgive me, I beſeech you, this irreſiſtible effuſion of I know not what, and I will offend no more.

To what a ſtate of happineſs am I exalted! But, alas! how thin the partition is between the moſt exalted happineſs and the deepeſt miſery! Here do I ſit encircled, as it were, in a radiance of joy, while the wall of my chamber alone ſeparates me from irrecoverable ſickneſs, pallid dejection, and pining grief. In the very moment that you have given me life, I find myſelf in the neighbourhood of death; the ghaſtly tyrant is at the chamber-door of my friend, and before to-morrow's dawn will have ſeized his victim. I was witneſs to a ſcene on Tueſday laſt that would have melted the moſt flinty heart; nay, I was a part of it.

As I was diſmounting from my horſe, on my return from the uſual exerciſe of the morning, my little ſervant came running out of the houſe, exclaiming, as he came along, that the gentleman was dying. I ran up ſtairs, and entering his chamber,

chamber, I ſaw him ſunk down into his arm-chair, in all the appearance of death. His mother had thrown a white handkerchief over her face, and ſupported herſelf, in an almoſt ſenſeleſs ſtate, againſt the wall; while his ſiſter was upon her knees, and, in an agony of deſpair, embracing thoſe of her mother. But the tender Amelia could not quit her lover at this awful moment; ſhe was upon one knee by the ſide of his chair, with his cold hand claſped in hers, and her deſpairing eyes lifted up to Heaven. The old ſervant ſtood, as it were, rivetted to the floor, in dumb and ſad amazement. After a ſhort involuntary pauſe, I approached the chair, and, on diſcovering ſigns of life, I inſtantly threw open the windows, turned the gaſping form towards the air, and, ſeizing a phial of cordial medicine, which was on the chimney-piece, I contrived to pour a little of it into his mouth, and, on finding that it paſſed, I continued

the doſe till he began to recover; and, in about a quarter of an hour, he was as well as he had been for ſome days paſt. When his ſurrounding friends ſaw their darling reſtored to life, another ſcene enſued, almoſt as diſtreſſing to me as the former, and which I ſhall not attempt to deſcribe. In the afternoon he grew more chearful than I had ever ſeen him, and indeed was ſo changed for the better, that I could have been almoſt diſpoſed to entertain hopes of his recovery. But the doctor ſtill continued to ſhake his head,

And left the room, with ſigns of ſorrow,
Deſpairing of his fee to-morrow.

It was nothing more than the laſt bright flaſh of an expiring flame, now ſunk deep into the ſocket. He could not bear to be moved from his bed yeſterday—alas! it will be my lot, ere a few more ſuns are ſet, to attend him to his hearſe.

But,

But, amid all the various agitations of my own joy, and ſympathy with others ſorrow, I get better and better. I pay the moſt prudent attention poſſible to all the ſalutary arrangements preſcribed me; and Time himſelf has conferred his never-failing regularity upon me. As you commanded me, I croſs the river and make the *Somerſetſhire* Downs the ſcene of almoſt every excurſion. On that ſide of the country the proſpects become more extenſive, the objects more *champêtres*, and the whole ſcene more tranquil. I can there take my wayward courſe without the fear of being interrupted by any of the ſocial company from the Hot Wells. On Monday afternoon, having got into a profound train of thought, the ſubject of which you may divine without any application to ſupernatural arts, I became inattentive to the way, till ſtrolling on, I arrived imperceptibly at the gates of a pleaſing little villa, which demanding my

attention, awoke me from my dream, and led me to conſider whereabouts I was. The gardener of the place happening to paſs by at the moment, informed me that I had travelled two or three miles beyond my uſual ramble; and, at the ſame time, invited me to ſee his maſter's improvements, of which he gave me, in his language, ſuch an animated deſcription, that I did not heſitate to accept his offer, and was immediately conducted by him into a moſt delicious retirement, poſſeſſed by rural beauty, and adorned by rural elegance. I thought it fairy land, and wondered that a Briſtol merchant, to whom my guide had informed me it belonged, ſhould have the taſte to adorn, or the feeling to enjoy, ſuch a paradiſe. But, at the very moment that ſuch a captious and illiberal idea glanced acroſs my mind, the maſter of the place appeared to offer me, in the moſt obliging manner, the refreſhments of his houſe. I found him

to

to be a man of polite and hoſpitable diſpoſitions, and who knows how to render good manners more valuable, by mingling a portion of humanity along with them; for he not only gave me a moſt comfortable diſh of tea, but, as I afterwards diſcovered, had alſo ordered a feed of corn for my horſe. This is an example of humane attention not often to be found among thoſe who are conſidered as finiſhed models of elegant behaviour. This gentleman, in the purſuit of commerce, had been in *Denmark*, and told me of his voyage, as well as ſatisfied me on ſome commercial points, with good ſenſe and agreeable behaviour. In a ſecond walk round his charming domain, I diſcovered here and there a diſpoſition of certain parts, which looked like the work of a claſſical mind, and I hinted as much to him: but he ingenuouſly told me, that he was indebted for thoſe arrangements to a lady of uncommon merit and talents,

talents, who had paſſed ſome time there, on a viſit to his ſiſters. He did me the favour to wiſh that I had come in the morning, to have paſſed the day with him; and I wiſhed ſo too. I left him, as I ſhall ever remember his civility, with a real ſenſe of regard and obligation.

I love from my heart to catch at circumſtances which come acroſs me ſo unawares, and without the leaſt expectation; they afford a ſatisfaction unalloyed with that preparation to enjoy, which ſuppreſſes enjoyment, and that expectation of delight, which, heightened, more or leſs, by the colouring of fancy, ſeldom fails to end in diſappointment. In my little experience (for in theſe matters, Heaven knows, it has been very little) I never remember what is called a party of pleaſure, though arranged and prepared with all poſſible care, that cloſed with the moſt common contentment; and I appeal to

your

your more extenſive knowledge of the ſubject for the confirmation of my opinion, which I really believe to have its foundation in truth. Indeed, this fallacy, which we all practiſe upon ourſelves, ſeems to be one of the many failings inſeparable from our imperfect natures, and to have no inconſiderable rank in the catalogue of miſerable appurtenances that invariably belong to our preſent ſtate of exiſtence. It is, indeed, impoſſible, in any one moment of our lives, let us employ what oblivious art we may, to get away from the conſciouſneſs of that imperfection which hangs upon us, and clings to us, wherever we go, and whatever we do. Even this little ſunny hour, which I enjoyed with ſo much ſatisfaction, was followed by vapours that obſcured it. Though I quitted my hoſt with regard, I felt at that moment a very ſevere mortification that I could not tell him my name, inform him of my abode, and expreſs

preſs the hopes of ſome time or other returning his civilities to himſelf or any of his friends. I may confeſs to you, that my evening's ride was embittered by the reflection that my name was no name—that my home was no where—and that I could not enjoy the grateful ſatisfaction which hope might give me of ſhewing kindneſs to him who had beſtowed kindneſs upon me.

You will tell me, perhaps, that this miſerable diſſatisfaction is not only of my own colour, but of my own fabrick—It may be ſo—I really do not wiſh to add any appropriate failing of mine to the general burthen with which poor human nature is already ſo heavily laden that ſhe ſcarce knows how to ſupport it. But here am I moralizing without end, and, I fear, to little purpoſe: I am, however, called this moment to a ſcene where the final object of all morals is enforced with a ſilent

a ſilent eloquence far more powerful than that which the moſt perſuaſive orators ever uttered—it is the death-bed of a virtuous man. I am almoſt aſhamed to carry my contented ſpirit into ſuch an afflicted ſociety: but contentment is a bleſſing I have ſo ſeldom known, that I cannot part with it for a moment; beſides, it is a gift which the firſt, the beſt, and the loveliеſt of her ſex has ſo graciouſly beſtowed upon me, and cannot, muſt not, be exchanged for unavailing ſorrow —I may conſole—I may ſympathize—I may be diſtreſſed—but I cannot now be wretched.

LETTER

LETTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

To Mr. ———.

NOTHING, my dear friend, is ſo eſſential to happineſs as a juſt appreciation of the good and evil of our natures and ſtations: but, to attain the art of holding the balance aright in which they are to be weighed, you muſt quit your cloſet and enter into the world. There are chimeras of happineſs as well as chimeras of miſery, and they are both foes to the attainable comforts and neceſſary duties of life. The man who lives in his ſtudy may diſtreſs or pleaſe his imagination with them; but let him leave his retirement, and mingle in the large ſociety of mankind, and he will ſoon be convinced that mankind are neither ſo happy or ſo miſerable as he thought them.

When

When he ſees ſullen diſcontent accompany wealth and fortune; when he diſcovers that beauty is often neglected, and virtue as often diſgraced, while vice and deformity ſecure their triumphs; when he beholds the cripple dance, and hears the blind beggar ſing; he will naturally change his opinion of things, and not ſuffer his imagination to deceive him any more. He will then acquire that judicious moderation of thought and ſentiment which will have a neceſſary influence on his conduct, check the violence of his fancy, and make him an happier man than he was before. It is this moderation that I ſo earneſtly recommend to you. You are always either in the torrid or the frigid zone, and fly with ſuch rapidity from one to the other, that one is in danger of being ſcorched or frozen to death in the purſuit of you. Be aſſured, my friend, that you will find me in neither; I love a temperate clime, and it is there alone I will conſent to make an aſſignation with you.

With

With all your knowledge, and all your understanding, do not be above hearing a little common-place truth; such a condescension will not disgrace you. Hill and dale, sun and shade, light and darkness, pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, with their different variations, and natural accompaniments, form the whole of material, animal, or intellectual nature. To frame an idea of basking in eternal sunshine, or to think of crawling beneath the mists of never-ceasing darkness, are not ideas for the world in which we live. The nature of our state, which is finite, implies a certain and necessary degree of imperfection; but we find, as we travel along, that the pleasures and inconveniencies of life have been both of them very much enhanced by the previous operations of our own exaggerating fancy. There is a weight upon the happiest, which prevents them from rising beyond a certain point; and there is a support which

which prevents the moſt wretched, if they are not ſo fooliſh as to reject it, from ſinking beneath their ſorrows. I would not be underſtood to include the loſs of reaſon, which has ſometimes been known to ariſe from an exceſs of joy, as well as from the violence of affliction, and very often changes the reality of the latter into a fancied ſtate of the former. But let us come to an example: and, in order to frame one to your feelings, I will take the brighteſt colours from the pallet of ſocial life; but what are the brighteſt colours without the ſhade neceſſary to relieve and give them force?

I will ſuppoſe a man to poſſeſs youth, health, talents, independence, virtue, and the object of his ardent affection. You will allow, I truſt, that my pencil has given a picture of human felicity that is ſeldom to be found in the gallery of Time; and, without reſting upon the common

common accidents of the hour, from which no one is or can be free, the very uncertainty of poſſeſſing theſe bleſſings for a moment is ſufficient to interrupt, in a certain degree the free current of happineſs. The mind, accuſtomed to great objects, deſpiſes little ones: heavy ſorrows make us inattentive to ſlight inconveniencies; but whenever we find ourſelves in that calm ſtate of life which is free from weighty afflictions, little diſappointments and petty vexations acquire ſtrength to buz about and torment us. To chaſe them away is utterly impoſſible; and to be inſenſible to them is to be without the common prudence and rational precaution ſo eſſential to that degree of comfort we are made capable of enjoying.

What are children but ſo many pleaſing anxieties and tender cares, even if we ſuppoſe them to eſcape the accidents

of

of infancy, and the dangers of youth, and that their more mature years afford the moſt gracious returns to parental affection! As I mean to give every poſſible advantage to the queſtion before me, I ſhall but juſt mention "how ſharper than a ſerpent's tooth it is to have a thankleſs child," and how many tender parents feel the bitter pangs of ſuch a diſconſolate, and, oftentimes, unavoidable ſituation. Though you are virtuous yourſelf, can you ſhut your eyes againſt ſurrounding vice, or ſteel your heart againſt the impreſſions of diſguſt, horror, and commiſeration, on beholding the open or more ſecret exerciſe of it? Though you may deſerve friendſhip and gratitude, you cannot command them; for the beſt of men are not free from the mortification of thankleſs returns and ſmiling hypocriſy. Even the godlike attribute of doing good, is not without its alloy of pain; nay, it is that conſideration which affords

the

the moſt exalted picture of human virtue. We are never free, in any ſtate or ſituation, from the thouſand ills the fleſh is heir to; and it ſeems to be neceſſary to the contentment of which we are capable, that it ſhould be ſo. The charming *Amelia*, whom I love ſo tenderly in your deſcription, would not conceive it to be poſſible that her happineſs ſhould have any interruption, if the object of her affection could be reſtored to his former health and to her. Alas! without hinting at the more than probability of a thouſand other untoward circumſtances, which ſhe muſt not hope to eſcape, the very remembrance of his paſt danger would be the ſource of continual ſolicitude. Every time the rain overtook him on his ride; whenever his feet were wet with the evening dew; at the leaſt trifling ſymptom of any little common infirmity, her fears would be alarmed, a relapſe of his former diſorder would preſent itſelf to

her

her imagination, and her life would be embittered from the exceſs of that affection whoſe enjoyment ſhe would vainly contemplate as the ſource of uninterrupted felicity.

To build airy caſtles of fancied paradiſaic happineſs, is a folly which may be allowed to two or three unexperienced years of boyiſh fancy, but is abſolutely unpardonable in mature and poliſhed underſtandings: it is to prefer a pantomime entertainment to a play of *Shakeſpeare*, a Tale of the Genii to the Hiſtory of *Tom Jones*, or an Indian fire-ſcreen to a picture of *Raphael's*. On the other hand, to dig a melancholy abyſs of fancied miſery, is a crime againſt that all-wiſe and juſt Providence, who has not placed us here to deſpair, but mingles bleſſings with our ſorrows, and gives us the means of making life, not a ſcene of bliſs, but a ſtate of comfort. Quit, therefore, the violence

violence of your enthuſiaſm, which always hurries you to extremes; and though the virtues of your heart may give it an amiable appearance, nothing can prevent its being troubleſome at all times; but, as you advance in years, and engage in the concerns of life, it will be the ſource of infinite perplexity and inconvenience. Endeavour, my friend, to prune your wings, and to be content with the common happineſs and common miſery of mortal men. Moderation does not imply lukewarmneſs and indifference; it is only another name for wiſdom. Such are my opinions; and, though they may be inaccurately expreſſed, looſely arranged, and of a ſuperficial texture, I am diſpoſed to think that they have their foundation in truth, and are neceſſary to happineſs; I mean the happineſs which we are permitted to enjoy in that order of things of which our ſufferings make a neceſſary, and,

and, perhaps, a beautiful part. But to change my ſubject—

Your viſit acroſs the Downs was in all reſpects a charming one: but you would not have acted conſiſtently with your uſual good management, if you had not contrived to pick a hole in the ſkirt of your own proper comfort. Have you forgot, that the *grateful mind, by owing, owes not, but ſtands at once indebted and diſcharged?* Beſides, my friend, I will add, for your ſatisfaction, that to receive favours, as you do, is to confer them. The gentleman who ſhewed you ſo much civility, is, I doubt not, perfectly ſatisfied with himſelf and with you, and deſires no other return for his politeneſs but another opportunity of repeating it. And then you begin to lament that you have no name—If that is a misfortune, at whoſe door will you lay it? *On ne vaut dans ce monde que ce qu'on veut valoir.*

You have talents to give celebrity to any name, and you hide them in obſcurity. It may be ſaid of you, as it has been ſaid of ſome celebrated character, that he was capable of attaining whatever he was capable of deſiring. How unpardonable therefore is it in you to ſigh beneath a fruitleſs wiſh, when a ſingle exertion might obtain its gratification? Do you languiſh for what is upon the oppoſite ſhore? Heſitate not a moment to plunge into the water—you have ſtrength to buffet the waves and to attain your object. But I paſs over that. You lament alſo that you have no home—You may not poſſeſs a paternal domain; you may ſtand alone, unſupported by kindred or relations—nevertheleſs, be of good cheer; your virtues have obtained an home for you in *the heart of a friend*; and, according to a proverb of your favourite modern language.

*E meglio un buon amico che cento parenti.**

* *One good friend* is better than an *hundred relations.*

LETTER

LETTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

To ———————.

THE very evening I wrote my laſt letter, the apprehenſions of it were juſtified; about nine o'clock my poor patient quitted his earthly tabernacle. He poſſeſſed uncommon knowledge and virtue; but he is gone to his reward, and grief is vain. Short as was my acquaintance with him, ſo many endearing and affecting circumſtances were crouded into it, that no part of my life will be unaccompanied with a tender remembrance of him. The mother and ſiſter ſupported themſelves with great magnanimity; but the diſtracted *Amelia* ſunk beneath the ſtroke, and was for ſeveral days in an almoſt conſtant ſtate of delirium and phrenzy. The phyſicians declared them to be by no means dangerous ſymptoms: they ought to know

theſe things; but I am ſure they were very affecting ones. I was once to ſee her during that period; and when I approached her bed-ſide, ſhe ſeized me eagerly by the hand, and, with a look of wild curioſity, exclaimed, "*Where have you buried him?*" and then ſunk down upon her pillow. At preſent, however, there is every reaſonable appearance of her recovery; and I thank Heaven for it. She is ſtill ſad and ſilent, but her mind is not violently diſturbed: ſhe readily ſubmits to what ever regimen is propoſed, and her appetite begins to return. In about a week or ten days this amiable but afflicted family propoſe to ſet out for their home—but, alas! the maſter of it is gone for ever, and the places that have known him ſhall know him no more! But I ſhall quit the ſcene of departed virtue, and approach nearer to the ſhrine of living excellence.

Your

Your letters are charming; and, to prove that I am ſincere in my opinion, I could read them with pleaſure if I did not know the writer of them. I cannot oppoſe your reaſonings, for they are juſt; nor can I refuſe to acknowledge the applications of them, for they are reaſonable; and I hope and truſt, that, by your inſtruction and paſtoral care, I ſhall become a convert to the doctrine of a ſolid and rational contentment. It requires no common knowledge in chemiſtry to make medicine tolerable to the palate: it demands alſo the utmoſt anatomical ſkill and practical ability to leſſen the ordinary pain of ſurgical operations; and, perhaps, an equal degree of comparative addreſs is neceſſary to weave delight with inſtruction, and to make admonitory correction pleaſant to the conſcious object of it. In the branch of mental medicine you are, as in every thing you do, without an equal—After all, I cannot per-

ſuade myſelf that I am awake, that I live, and am an object of your beſt regard. But I am on the verge of forbidden ground, on which I can only caſt a longing eye, and return to the limits which you have preſcribed me. My obedience may be reluctant, but that cannot offend, if I finally obey. My mind, and every faculty of it, is yours, and owns its miſtreſs—my ſoul, with all its ſenſibilities, ſubmits to you—even my health is charmed by your wiſhes, and gives the glow to my cheek which you have commanded.

While death is mowing down ſuch a plentiful harveſt all around me, I bid fair to remain long enough in the land of the living. Indeed, I am ſo much better, my ſtrength ſo much recovered, and my appetite ſo much encreaſed, that I have petitioned, as I ſuppoſe you already know, to quit my *Pythagorean* ſyſtem for a little mutton

mutton and beef. I have ſcarce taſted animal food ſince I have been here: the quantity of ſtrawberries I daily eat would ſurprize you: *Linnæus* ſays, that they cured him radically of the gout; and I am ſure they will help me, at leaſt, to get rid of my hectic affections. The high-prieſt of the fountain has complimented me upon my good looks; of which, indeed, there is a very ſmall proportion in the morning aſſembly of the pump-room.

That the generality of public water-drinking and bathing places ſhould be ſcenes of amuſement and pleaſure, is very natural, and may be very proper; but I really think that the Briſtol Hot Wells ſhould be an eternal exception. The diſeaſe, for whoſe cure application is made to theſe waters, is of ſuch a nature as to render every ſpecies of public re-creation, in the higheſt degree, unſalutary

and obnoxious; nevertheleſs here are balls, public breakfaſts, and all the train of amuſements which are ſuitable only to health and ſpirits. There is alſo a maſter of the ceremonies to regulate the whole, who is very obliging and attentive to the duties of an office which does not belong to ſuch a place as this. Phthiſical patients have no buſineſs at a ball or a public breakfaſt; a cotillion was not formed for them: the fatigue of dreſs, the hurry of pleaſure, hot rooms, and night air, to perſons ſo afflicted, are ſo many ſecret arrows from the quiver of fate: yet, on an accidental viſit to the rooms on one of their gay mornings, I ſaw a number of gaſping ſhadows dancing away, without meaning a pun, as if they had not an hour to live, and coughing in time to the muſic that inſpired them. Indeed, one of the ſprightly nymphs fainted in the dance, and was carried home almoſt motionleſs, attended by the frantic

deſpair

deſpair of her imprudent mother. This place is a ſcene of ſickneſs and of death; and I do not think that ſuch a picture of pleaſure ſhould be ſhewn even to the *lack-luſtre* eye of conſumptive youth. Nor do they, who attend their ſick relations and friends to the doubtful recovery of theſe waters, expreſs a due ſenſibility to their condition, in hurrying from the duties of a ſick chamber to ſcenes of public feſtivity. In great cities we find the benefit of a *police*, which protects the public ſafety;—a gentleman of *Bath* entered very learnedly with me, the other day, into the *police of Pleaſure*, which governs and is ſo eſſential to that centre of amuſement:—I am ſure that, at this place, it is abſolutely neceſſary to eſtabliſh a *police of Health*; an arrangement which would give the moſt beneficial aid to the ſalutary virtues of its medicinal ſprings.

I write upon a popular ſubject in a very unpopular manner; but it is not the firſt time. In my tour with Doctor ——, which I have frequently mentioned to you, we paſſed through *Worceſter* at the time of the aſſizes; and while, in the lower part of the county hall, criminals were ſtanding at the bar of juſtice, loaded with fetters, and trembling for their lives, nay, perhaps, in the very moment of being ſentenced to ſuffer, a large company were aſſembling in the room above to enjoy all the feſtivity of muſic and dancing. The circumſtance ſhocked me at the time, and I had ſoon an opportunity to ſcourge ſuch notorious inſenſibility. On an application being made to me by a fellow collegian, to aſſiſt him in the compoſition of an *Aſſize Sermon*, I moſt readily complied with his requeſt; and took an opportunity, at the cloſe of the diſcourſe, to reprobate, with all the energy and colouring of which my

pen

pen was capable, the cruel indecency of making the ſeaſon of public juſtice a time for public pleaſure. The judges complimented my friend upon his ſermon, and requeſted him to print it: but the ladies threatened to ſtrip his gown over his ears; and I will aſſure you, for the honour of your ſex, that, if he had not ſuppreſſed the publication of it, he would have loſt a very comfortable preferment which he now enjoys.

The pleaſure of theſe Wells ſhould be the pleaſure of adminiſtering comfort, and affording relief to the afflicted objects who frequent them. We ſee age ſink, from its natural infirmities, into the grave, without receiving any very painful ſhock upon our ſenſibility. The fierce attack of violent diſorders ſoon brings on a criſis, and health is reſtored, or Fate ſeizes its victim, and a lingering ſuſpence does not torment us: but to

ſee

ſee the ſtrength of youth, and the flower of beauty, ſink, by a ſlow but perceptible gradation, from beſide us, is a circumſtance of no common miſery. In ſuch a gentle, but certain, decline of health, when languor ſoftens the character, and makes it more intereſting; when we are not fatigued with the cries of agonizing pain, or teazed with reſtleſs complaints of impatient diſeaſe; when all is calm and quiet, and Death makes his attack by ſuch ſubtle and ſilent approaches, that the object of his deſtruction does not perceive the danger; it becomes a moſt pious act of duty to watch the expiring lamp, and, ſince life cannot be ultimately preſerved, by all the arts of kind and conſtant attention, to ſmooth the paſſage to the grave, and avert, as it may be, the pains of diſſolution. Theſe *ſombre* hiſtories may, I fear, afflict thy tender ſpirit—but in deſcribing the ſcenes around me, I give you the picture of my own mind,

mind, as you commanded me. Adieu! I am going to my evening office of conſolation, happy, thrice happy that your approbation and good wiſhes attend me thither!

LETTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

To Mr. — — — —.

THE very idea of our mortality affects, more or leſs, the lively emotions of every heart: it cannot be dreſſed out in any form that will reconcile the reflecting mind to paſs it by without the natural ſenſations of awe and ſolemnity. Though we ſee death on the bier of virtue, or on the car of glory; though we conſider it as the puniſhment due to the criminal, or a kind relief from miſery and pain; ſtill it poſſeſſes a gloomy influence

fluence that we in vain reſiſt. I was ſincerely affected with the information that your amiable friend is no more, tho' I fully expected the event; and really think, as his caſe was irrecoverable, that it is a bleſſing both for himſelf and his ſurviving friends, that he ſhould be removed. The tender care of thoſe around him could not reſtore him; and if he had lingered on, to have demanded a much longer continuance of their attentions, one or other of them might have fallen a ſacrifice to that vigilant anxiety which could procure no laſting or ſolid benefit to the object of it. It is better, my friend, as it is.

I pity the diſtreſſes of *Amelia* from my ſoul; but time and variety, which produce a great alleviation to all ſorrows, are, generally ſpeaking, infallible cures for thē afflictions of her age. I doubt not of her ſenſibility; nor do I heſitate a moment to believe

believe her paſſion to have been ſincere, ardent, and virtuous; but I am not one of thoſe who give any very great credit to the hiſtories of perſons who have died for love. The human heart is formed of tougher materials than people in general imagine; it is of a very elaſtic nature, and, however great the ſtroke, when left to itſelf, is very much diſpoſed to recover ſome degree, if not all, of its former tone and tranquillity. A momentary fit of rage may end, as it ſometimes happens, in ſelf-deſtruction; but it very ſeldom kills without ſome adventitious aid. Vehement grief may trouble our reaſon; but it does not, of itſelf, deſtroy life. Violent diſappointments, from whatever cauſe they may ariſe, produce, more or leſs, violent convulſions in the human frame; and where there is a diſpoſition in the conſtitution to any particular diſorder—where the malady is already commenced, as well as in perſons of a delicate texture

and

and particular habits, a deep and aggravated grief may call the lurking diſeaſe from its cell, give new force to that whoſe career begins to alarm, or ſhake thoſe feeble props of life which were already too weak for the purpoſes of ſuſtaining it in healthful vigour; and when the victim falls, the ſad cataſtrophe is conſidered as the ſole work of affliction. Sorrow may encreaſe the infirmities of early years, and bring on a kind of premature old age; but it is only an aſſiſtant, though I muſt acknowledge it to be a very terrible one, in the buſineſs of death. I believe it would be a very difficult-taſk to find an example of any one, poſſeſſed of full health, and an unbroken conſtitution, who died, in reality, of what is called a broken heart; though I myſelf had a near relation, who, after having wept and mourned over the ruinous follies of a darling ſon during twenty-five years, was univerſally

ſally declared, at the age of ſeventy-ſix, to have died of this fatal diſorder.

It is in our youth that the mind poſſeſſes the moſt lively ſenſe of pain and pleaſure; but it is at the ſame early period that both the one and the other make the ſlighteſt impreſſions. It is then that the tear is often forgot as ſoon as ſhed; and that the pleaſure already enjoyed is loſt in the novelty of that which courts enjoyment. Beſides, this is the ſeaſon when Hope, that friend to man, poſſeſſes all its vigour, and darts its piercing ray, with irreſiſtible rapidity, through the ſurrounding gloom, to objects of brighter aſpect. I would not, however, be conſidered as exerciſing a forward, unbecoming rigour on my own ſex, and on that thoughtleſs age which I have ſcarce paſſed; nor would I even hint that there are no examples of female ſufferers under the ſevere and poignant croſſes of the tender paſſion; but I boldly

boldly contend, for truth will bear me out in the opinion, that, though the pain may be great when diſappointment feſters the wounds of love, a mortification ſo rarely enſues, that the circumſtance, whenever it does happen, ſhould be cited rather as an exception to the natural courſe of youthful paſſion, than as an ordinary example of it. The amiable Lady *Taviſtock* was the certain victim of that regret which followed the death of her Lord; but, without entering into the motives to her grief, or deſcribing a variety of circumſtances which ſingularize her affection, I ſhould not allow one ſad example of a broken heart to be oppoſed to the general tenor of my argument. I pity the charming *Amelia*, and ſympathize with her in all her ſufferings: but, from your account of her, they already begin to loſe their energy. The bloom will ſoon return to her cheek, and the luſtre to her eye; the ſmile will again brighten her

her face, and comfort will once more beam upon her heart.

Without the leaſt deſign to make any perſonal application, I muſt beg leave to inform you, that there is not a more whimſical, inconſiderate, capricious, and artleſs creature in the world, than *a grown miſs*. I write with knowledge, for I have known and been the confidential friend of many of them; nor is my memory ſo bad, or the time ſo diſtant, when I poſſeſſed that character myſelf, as to make it poſſible for me to forget the attributes of it. Now, Sir, I muſt inform you, that the natural foible of this period is the deſire of pleaſing; by which nothing more or leſs is to be underſtood, than a wiſh to excite the tender paſſion in others, and a diſpoſition, that modern education too eagerly cultivates and encourages, to receive, without knowing why or wherefore, the tender impreſſions ourſelves. Females are taught,

taught, in their very nurſeries, to attract admiration; and, as they grow up, they are carefully inſtructed how to heighten their charms, till at length they become well acquainted with the neceſſary buſineſs, and as well informed for what end thoſe charms are to be employed. I do not treſpaſs upon the boundaries of truth when I aſſert, that the young woman, who wiſhes to make every man in love with her, is already more than diſpoſed to be in love with the firſt whoſe caſual attentions, or flirting compliments, appear, in her fancy, to announce the deſired conqueſt. If, however, from the continuance of his aſſiduities, public report ſhould prove an echo to her ſighs, the young lady's paſſion becomes more ardent; and, if propoſals of marriage ſhould, at length, be offered, ſhe riſes at once into a moſt deſperate *inamorata*, and, without any one criterion to judge of happineſs, preſents herſelf at the alter in the full expectation

of

of an age of bliſs. But, as it ſometimes happens in this world that ſtrange things fall out between the cup and the lip, ſhould diſappointment croſs her wiſhes when ſhe was certain of their gratification, ſhe cannot live for the firſt fortnight, hurries into the country to vary the ſcene, and to eſcape from the mortification of pity and condolence, is ſad and ſilent for a time, till, at length, ſhe recovers herſelf ſufficiently to triumph over her paſt weakneſs, and to be in love again: ſo that, after half a ſcore tender paſſions, and as many croſſes, if ſhe ſhould have ſo many trials, ſhe loſes all her incautious innocence, and becomes a frolicſome and finiſhed coquette.

The far greater part of thoſe friends, and they were no ſmall number, which I poſſeſſed in my early youth, have all of them been dying for love, and are now married. I ſhall not attempt to amuſe you

you with a public ſtage performance; I will take you at once behind the ſcenes, and diſcover the actreſſes to you as they are. Some of the principal of them ſhall paſs in review before you.

Arabella attracted the notice of a country gentleman at a country horſe-race. He danced with her, and liked her: ſhe was not ungrateful, and fell violently in love with him. He had a fine houſe, a large park, and a good eſtate; was rather of an agreeable figure, and generally eſteemed and reſpected in the country where he lived. He did not long delay to make propoſals of marriage to my friend: but, like a man of honour and good ſenſe, he gave an unreſerved hiſtory of his character and diſpoſitions, diſcloſed his averſion to a town reſidence, and his rooted preference to the occupations and pleaſures of a country life. This was the very man and the very ſituation which poor

poor *Arabella* thought ſhe wanted: *London* became at once, in her mind, an odious and filthy place; the ſcene of dirt, of vice, and corruption: chearful health, unſpotted virtue, and ſimple pleaſure, were alone to be found and enjoyed in the employments of rural life. The Opera was diſcord to the muſic of the grove; and no chorus of *Handel* poſſeſſed half the power to animate as the cry of the hounds. On her leaving town to be married, ſhe kindly came to bid her young virgin friends adieu; to tell them of her approaching happineſs, and to pity them. It is now ſomething more than a year ſince ſhe became a wife to the object of her idolatry, who treats her with kindneſs, and loves her even *better than his horſe*. But, as ſhe conſented to his plan of life before marriage, he is determined to keep her to it afterwards. She now finds riding on horſeback too violent an exerciſe, and that the driving cream-coloured ponies

nies in a large park, where nobody ſees her, is too dull. Her little menagerie, of which ſome months ago ſhe was ſo fond, is now wholly neglected. Hounds are horrid things; ſportſmen are monſtrous beings; and to ſit reading beneath a poplar, on the banks of a river, is too romantic. Her country neighbours are ſtupid; and country amuſements of every kind are inſipid even to vexation. In ſhort, the greateſt part of her time is employed in writing the moſt perſecuting letters to all her friends in the capital, to ſend her the hiſtory of any thing and of every thing that is going forward in *dear, dear, dear London.* With anſwers to theſe epiſtles, new plays, novels, and ſcandalous chronicles, ſhe helps on thoſe ſluggiſh hours that love no longer bears upon his wings. She is not yet a mother; nor has ſhe any other deſire of being one but what ariſes from her huſband's determination that ſhe ſhould be brought to bed in town.

Lucinda

Lucinda is charmed with the pleaſing manners and aſſiduous reſpect of a young officer of good family, of very advanced rank for his age, but of moderate fortune. Her friends oppoſe the progreſs of this connection, but ſhe will receive no council, and will hear no reaſon. Beauty, ſhe ſays, is the reward due to bravery: to diſdain the common intereſted views of matrimonial regulations, is a kind of heroiſm which makes a woman worthy the poſſeſſion of an hero. When it is urged, that her huſband may be ſent on foreign ſervice, and be ſeparated from her for years, or, by the events of war, be ſeparated from her for ever, her reſolution is not ſhaken. She acknowledges that ſuch a circumſtance would affect her feelings; but, while a ſoldier is acquiring glory for his country and laurels for himſelf abroad, ſhe declares it to be the duty of his wife to loſe her private uneaſineſs, and ſink her female

fears, in the hopes of her country's and her huſband's honour. The wreath that ſhould crown his brow would be a chaplet for hers; and, if it ſhould be his lot to fall on that bed of glory where ſo many heroes have fallen before him, ſhe would revere his memory by an eternal widowhood, and blend the tears of connubial regret with the ſighs of a grateful country. In ſhort, her paſſion becomes ſo violent, that her friends conſent to the union, and ſhe throws herſelf into the arms of an amiable lieutenant-colonel, who has never ſeen any ſervice but at a review or a riot. The ſcene, however, is now changed, and her brilliant heroiſm is no more: ſhe begins to think that country quarters are horrid things, and laments that their fortune is not ſufficient to admit of her living at home while the colonel is on duty: nor does ſhe find a recompence for ſuch an inconvenience in the conſtant attentions of an huſband who adores her,

and

and whom ſhe fancied, but a few months before, to be the object of her own idolatry.

Leonora was addreſſed by a young clergyman of good fortune, great connections, conſiderable preferment, extenſive knowledge, and amiable manners. There could be no objection on the part of her family, and her own heart poſſeſſed the warmeſt wiſhes for an union with ſuch a man. When her young friends were diſpoſed to exerciſe a little friendly *badinage* upon the future parſon's wife, ſhe uſed to anſwer, with all the ſerioufneſs imaginable, that there was no life equal to that whoſe comforts reſt on the enjoyment and practice of the tranquil virtues: that the pleaſures of the world afford a turbulent kind of feveriſh joy, which, to ſay no worſe, ends in diſguſt: that the ſociety and affection of an amiable, learned, and good man, was the beſt this world could

afford, and bore the neareſt reſemblance to that which is to be our reward in another. Thus would ſhe preach, and, as we uſed to tell her, already occupy her future huſband's pulpit—though I once heard her hint, that pride might find ſatisfaction in parochial honours; that it were better with Cæſar to be the firſt in a village than the ſecond in an empire; and that a mitre was as handſome an ornament to a coach as a coronet. Theſe were her ſentiments when ſhe married the excellent man who now poſſeſſes her; but ſhe ſoon yielded to other opinions leſs rational and leſs ſaitsfactory. She preaches no more. The ſobriety of a clergyman's houſe, the regularity of life, the neceſſity of example, and the becoming indifference to parade and oſtentation, ſo eſſential to clerical virtue, do not ſatisfy her; and ſhe would much rather go every night to ſome public amuſement, than to the regular duty of evening family prayer.

But

But ſhe has too much good ſenſe to make complaints or appear diſcontented; though an intimate friend, without any communication on her part, may wind herſelf into the ſecret. Her ſituation, however, in itſelf, is truly enviable; and, as ſhe promiſes ſhortly to be a mother, her good underſtanding will, I truſt, awake her into a ſenſe of her happineſs, and inſtruct her how to deſerve and enjoy it.

Belinda is the laſt whom I ſhall have the honour of preſenting to you. She ſacrificed her willing affections to a man of high rank and quality, but a debauchee and a drunkard of no common notoriety. All her relations could do, and all her friends could ſay, availed nothing. She had lived till ſhe was near twenty with an aunt of ſingular humour, and who ſeldom let the bird out of its cage for a moment: but, at this period, a large ſucceſſion made her a large fortune; and, as ſhe was ſo

near of age, nothing could be finally done to prevent her wretched fancy from hurrying her on to repentance. She was certain, however, that her lover was a man of real virtue in his heart, but that an unlucky connection with bad men had reduced his eaſy, amiable, and unſuſpicious temper into exceſſes that he himſelf deſpiſed. She was aſſured, moreover, that his ſoul languiſhed, for the pleaſures of virtuous life, and that it would be her pleaſing duty and boaſted triumph to lead him back, by the ſilken bands of love, to honour and to happineſs. With this fallacious expectation playing on her fancy, the enamoured *Belinda* became a peereſs: but, alas! her nuptials were ſcarce over, when

She ſigh'd, and was no peereſs at her heart.

Within a week her virtuous huſband treated her with the moſt unreſerved indignity;

dignity; and, after ſtruggling through two years of mortification and miſery with her charming mate, ſhe looks forward to a ſeparation from him as the only ſource of any comfort: and ſuch a meaſure is now reported to be in actual agitation.

The concluſion I would draw from theſe examples is this: that every one of theſe love-ſick fair ones, and I could name a great many more, if their lovers had been ſnatched from them at the eve of their marriage, would have been in a ſimilar ſtate of affliction, without meaning an unfavourable compariſon, to your afflicted *Amelia*. I am convinced that the object of her affection poſſeſſed all the virtues with which your pen has adorned him; but a tender-hearted miſs ſeldom fails to find them in the man ſhe loves, and the reality exiſts for her till time and

chance awaken her from the pleaſing delirium.

If, however, you ſhould aſk me, and the queſtion will be neither unnatural or unreaſonable, by what good fortune I have eſcaped the idle attachments and unpleaſant experience of ſo many of my acquaintance, I will tell you in a few words, and without reſerve. I owe the privileges and happineſs of my preſent ſituation to the beſt poſſible education, to the moſt improving ſociety, the moſt rational relations, and the kindeſt friends; to which I may add, a natural but chearful diſpoſition to retirement, and an obſtinate averſion to be governed by the faſhion and opinions of the world. But, after all, my hour of danger is not paſt; and the time may come when my gentle friends, with whoſe foibles I have lengthened out this letter, may make mine the ſubject of their epiſtles; but, though they may

may wonder at and blame, if they pleaſe, the conduct of my affection, I am diſpoſed to think that they will not have it in their power to pity my repentance.

Thus, my friend, I have given you a very ſlight ſketch of a very trifling part of the female character; but by that you may form ſome judgment of the whole; and, ſhort as it is, the length of it obliges me to paſs over many very intereſting parts of your laſt letter; for I was proud of my ſubject, as it is the only one in which I could preſume to inſtruct you. Adieu! I have continued writing almoſt till midnight, and my pillow expects me. When I offer up my petitions from thence for the continuation of Heaven's care and protection, be aſſured, my friend, that you will not be forgotten.

LETTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

To ——————.

YOUR admirable letter had been upon my table a few hours before my return from a little excurſion, which has anſwered, for there was humanity in it. The amiable family, who have formed an intereſting ſubject in our late correſpondence, preſſed me very much to return home, and paſs the reſt of the ſummer with them. This obliging offer I did not accept; for I had not your permiſſion to remove from my poſt, and I began to languiſh for tranquillity and ſolitude. The propoſal, however, of accompanying them a day's journey on their departure, could not be refuſed, and I took my leave of them yeſterday evening at *Stourhead*, the ſeat of Mr. *Hoare*, where I know you have been, and which, on that account, afford-

ed,

ed me a more tranſcendant pleaſure in the review of it. They went on to *Sherborne*, and I returned to *Frome*, paſſing through Lord *Weymouth*'s magnificent park, and arrived at *Clifton* laſt night, refreſhed rather than fatigued by my journey.

We have, in *England*, added another to the elegant ſiſter arts that have ſo long received the homage of mankind. Gardening may now join itſelf to poetry, muſic, and painting, without doing any diſcredit to either of them. It is, indeed, nearly allied to the latter, though, in my opinion, far ſuperior to it: it is the creating a real landſcape, inſtead of painting an imaginary one. *Claude Lorrain* had but a few ſquare feet of canvas for the field of his glowing genius; while *Browne*, whom I conſider as the *Claude Lorrain* of gardeners, has an ample ſpace of the earth's ſurface for the exertion of his talents.

talents. The former is an imitator of Nature with the implements of Art; the other is an improver of Nature with the implements of Nature: the one commands his pallet—the other directs the elements. In ſhort, the gardener forms an original, of which the painter can only copy diſtinct features.

Stourhead, taken in all its parts, comprehends an uncommon ſhare of magnificence and beauty, arranged with ſuperlative elegance, and heightened with all the grandeur of art. But, to my ſimple mind, the wooden bridge after *Palladio*, that forms the moſt beautiful arch I ever ſaw, and the grotto, with all the natural appendages to its character, are the moſt charming among the more adventitious parts of this terreſtrial paradiſe. It is a real grotto, and not a ſhell-room with an aſſumed title that does not belong to it; and the circumſtance of a real river riſing from the

urn of a River God, in a receſs of it, is worth all the decorations that architecture and ſculpture can beſtow upon garden ſcenery. I do not propoſe to make a compariſon between *Stourhead* and any other among thoſe beautiful places which are its rivals; but it poſſeſſes within itſelf, and what I ſhall call its acceſſory parts, a finer ſubject for the pencil of a painter than other private domain that I have ſeen. The ſpot from whence the view muſt be taken, which I would recommend to the beſt of our modern *Claudes*, is between the entrance into the garden from the inn and the ſtone bridge that croſſes one of the outlets from the lake, inclining, however, towards the road. I ſhould be moſt happy if this idea ſhould have impreſſed itſelf upon your mind as it did upon mine; for ſuch a claſſical landſcape aſſemblage, both for foreground and diſtance, I never ſaw in any other of thoſe delightful Edens which adorn and are peculiar

peculiar to our iſland, though I might, perhaps, even prefer ſome of them to that which has juſt received my imperfect admiration. The ſylvan ſcenes of *Hagley*, which *Thomſon* ſo juſtly calls the *Britiſh Tempe*, ſtill maintain their wonted ſuperiority in my fancy.

I cannot conceive a more pleaſing employment than that of ſhaping the rude features of Nature into thoſe highly poliſhed and decorated landſcapes which form ſuch a diſtinguiſhing part of *Britiſh* taſte and magnificence. I envy Mr. *Browne*'s profeſſion far more than that of a prime miniſter; and, in my tour through *England*, whenever I viſited any of thoſe places which his genius had deſigned or adorned, I never failed to wiſh that I had ſerved an apprenticeſhip to him, and had ſucceeded in the practice of his art. But I muſt quit the ſubject of material, to thank you for your charming little ſketches of intellectual, Nature.

You

You have now, my dear lady, let me ſo far into the ſecret, that I ſhall no longer remain in *Uncle Toby*'s ſtate of ignorance, who is repreſented as not knowing the right from the wrong end of a woman. And, perhaps, I ſhould have continued to be as deficient in this material point as that worthy gentleman, if you had not favoured me with your kind illuminations on the ſubject. I have often heard it aſſerted, that woman was a riddle, and, of all riddles, the moſt difficult to be expounded; but, not poſſeſſing an acuteneſs of intellect equal to a common enigma, I never thought of encountering this almoſt inexplicable problem. Perhaps, though I do not mean an improper compariſon, as gameſters alone can detect the tricks of gameſters, women alone may be qualified to unfold the myſteries of the female heart. If, however, your opinions were to be made public, the whole legion of grown miſſes would riſe, as one woman, againſt

againſt you, for daring to take from them the glorious poſſibility of dying for love.

If, indeed, the common croſſes of the tender paſſion were an heart-breaking buſineſs, there would ſoon be an end of the human race, as it is hardly poſſible for a young perſon, of either ſex, to eſcape them. Grief, like the worm in the bud, may prey, for a time, upon the damaſk cheek, and leave it to recover its former bloom; but ſurely there may be ſituations, where, from a certain combination of circumſtances, diſappointment alone may inſinuate ſuch a poiſon into the ſprings of life, as to bring the moſt ſturdy health to the grave. Indeed, I know of one—and I could name it to you—but no more of that.

As for our poor *Amelia*, whoſe ſufferings have been the text of your diſcourſe, ſhe will verify your opinions; there is no apparent

apparent danger of her following her departed lover. Nevertheleſs, I cannot think that the effects of his death will be entirely obliterated from her mind, by any events of her future life, be they what they may: for I am clearly of opinion, that, in the articles of ſenſibility and underſtanding, ſhe is ſuperior to every one of thoſe characters whom you have exhibited as examples to ſupport the general truth of your doctrine. And now, Madam, permit me to add a little hiſtory, illuſtrative, in ſome meaſure, of both our opinions, which happened two or three ſeaſons ago at this place. I received it from the beſt authority; and you may depend upon the truth of my narration.

A young lady, of a pleaſing figure and amiable manners, arrives, with her mother and another female relation at the *Hot-Wells*, in a ſtate of health that threatened an approaching conſumption, which was

was attributed to one or other of the natural cauſes of that diſorder. She drank the waters for ſome time with great regularity, but without ſucceſs; when one morning a young man of genteel appearance, but with a pale and hectic look, entered the pump-room; and, as he paſſed on to the ſpring, "Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the mother of the young lady, "that ſurely is Mr. ———, but he is worn to a ſhadow;" and at that moment her daughter ſunk down ſenſeleſs upon the floor: but the neceſſary remedies being immediately applied, ſhe was ſoon recovered and taken home; while the accidental fainting was conſidered as incidental to her diſorder, or the uncommon heat of the weather. However, the averſion ſhe now expreſſed to the repeating her morning attendance at the fountain, with a repitition of the fit ſome days after, at the moment of this ſame gentleman's entrance into the pump-room,

brought

brought on ſomewhat of an enquiry; and ſhe confeſſed to her mother that ſhe had conceived a moſt fond and violent paſſion for that perſon, but without any aſſiduities on his part, as ſhe had no more acquaintance with him than the reſt of her family, which was that of the moſt diſtant civility. She declared that ſhe had moſt ſeverely ſtruggled with this ſudden and unaccountable affection, but in vain; that ſhe had never before communicated it to any human being; that the object of it was as ignorant of its exiſtence as her own family had hitherto been; and that he himſelf, as ſhe had been informed, was ſick from the ill treatment of a lady who had baſely deſerted him after ſhe had received his propoſals of marriage, and had conſented to the conſummation of it. The fact was exactly as ſhe had related it; for this young man had actually fretted himſelf into thin ſhapes from diſappointed love, and was ordered to *Briſtol* for his recovery.

recovery. Here was a very critical and arduous ſituation. The mother of our heroine was a woman who knew the world, without having ever deigned to practiſe the petty arts of it. Her daughter was all that Providence had left her of five children, and all that the fondeſt parent could deſire. Affection would naturally impel ſuch a mother to go beyond the line of her uſual conduct for the happineſs, and, as it might be, for the preſervation of ſuch a child: but the natural dignity of her own character, the conſciouſneſs of her daughter's merit, and the pride which, in certain circumſtances, never fails to attend upon large fortune, would combine to make her proceed with great caution in a buſineſs replete with mortification, attended with difficulties, and, after all, of doubtful expectations. The young gentleman himſelf was a perſon of the moſt amiable character, of good family, and independent fortune;

fortune; but he was, at this very moment, pale and languid from the violence of his paſſion for another woman. Something, however, was to be tried; and the good lady, who ſaw a glimmering of hope where a leſs experienced mind would have been loſt in deſpair, took an immediate opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with him, entered, with an intereſting concern, into the nature of his diſorder, gave him very affectionate advice upon the mode of conducting himſelf, and, after a good deal of that motherly converſation, which, by mingling a kind of polite authority with ſympathetic tenderneſs, acquires a wonderful influence over a young and amiable mind, ſhe invited him to come and ſee her. He did not delay his viſit; and the mother's attentions were now heightened by the daughter's preſence. He loved muſic, and the young lady approached her harpſichord, to make it expreſs a tender ſtrain, in uniſon with her

her own tender feelings. He happened to mention *Jackſon* of *Exeter* as a favourite compoſer, and he was invited to hear *Harriet* ſing ſome of his airs the next day, on condition he would keep it a ſecret, leſt her phyſician ſhould hear of it, who had abſolutely forbid all vocal exertions. But this viſit had enlivened *Harriet*'s heart beyond all the powers of medical aid; and the next day ſhe ſung Mr. *Jackſon*'s airs with a voice ſtolen from heaven, while ſhe gave them that affecting expreſſion which ſo naturally ariſes from a love-ſick heart.—In ſhort, the young gentleman never miſſed a day without paying his viſits where they were ſo welcome: the young lady, in ſuch ſociety, grew better and better; her charms began to recover their former ſplendour, and awakened a new and more laſting paſſion in our hero's breaſt. At length, from being a friend of the family, he became one of it; and

now

now lives in the conſtant employment of giving happineſs to the lovely perſon from whom he receives all his own. Of this little hiſtory I ſhall make no application; it did my heart good, and I am certain that it will ſatisfy yours.

I prefer thoſe tragedies which have a fortunate cataſtrophe: it is too much to be tortured with doubt and ſuſpence through five long acts of certain agony and doubtful joy, and then to behold death come at laſt, and oftentimes in its moſt horrid form, to ſnatch the wretched from the ſtorms of fate. Let the good be tried and proved to the utmoſt, but I wiſh to have them triumph at laſt; and I am content to let the wicked poſſeſs themſelves in temporary fortune and proſperity, if they do but receive their final puniſhment. You will tell me, that the repreſentations of Nature and things demand a rigid adherence to their reſpective originals;

originals; and that the affairs of this world are oftentimes in direct contrariety to my wiſhes. This may be true: but the poet has a large repoſitory from whence he may take his ſubjects, and it is his duty to chuſe the beſt.

—But writing of ſcenes and tragedies ſuggeſts to my remembrance an exhibition of the laſt ſcene of the tragedy of life that I ſaw the other morning, which was accompanied with circumſtances ſo new and ſingular to me, that they conveyed to my fancy a very powerful comic impreſſion. Inſtead of going to the Wells by the Down, as uſual, I took my way by the College Green; and, as I paſſed by the Cathedral, a funeral proceſſion croſſed my way, preceded by the phyſicians of the deceaſed perſon, adorned in all the ſable, ſilken pomp of ſcarfs, and hatbands. On ſuch an idea, *Moliere*, whoſe love for the faculty is well known, would

would have employed more wit in one page than I ſhould be able to produce in my whole life. I ſhall not, therefore, attempt any. While there is life there are hopes, is a proverb of general uſe: but the doctors of this place have improved upon the maxim, and with them it is, While there is life *there are fees*; but, after death, nothing is to be got but a morſel of black ſilk to make an houſewife's apron. I ſhould rather have conceived it to be a puniſhment for their ignorance, than a compliment for their care, that phyſicians ſhould be invited to convoy to their laſt abode, beneath the full ſail of funeral drapery, the patients whom, to ſay no worſe, they could not ſave. This idea has played upon my fancy more, perhaps, than you will approve; I ſhall, therefore, have done.

As I propoſe, in caſe you ſhall have no objection, to remain here till your return to town, I have written to Mrs. ——— to ſend me a box of books, with ſome muſic,

as I have retained the harpſichord which had been hired for the amuſement of my poor friend. Will you be ſo good as to let her know your ſentiments upon the ſubject. Adieu! My grateful heart returns your nocturnal valediction to you.

LETTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

To Mr — — —.

IMPATIENCE is not a leading feature of my character; I can therefore defer, for a few lines, the intereſting and unexpected ſubject of this letter, to anſwer the laſt article of yours. I have informed Mrs. ——— that nothing can be more agreeable to me than your determination to remain where you are; and whatever may tend to your amuſement, and to make the interval paſs pleaſantly away till we meet again, ſhe has my orders to procure and ſend you. It will be upwards of four months, and muſt, of courſe, include ſome of the long winter evenings;

evenings; ſo do not be a niggard in your commiſſions. The harpſichord will be a pleaſant companion to you, and I rejoice that you have made it a moveable of your apartment. May the ſounds of your muſic give the ſame pleaſure to your own heart that they have often afforded to mine!—But I haſten to relieve your impatience.

Know, then, that your charming *Amelia* turns out to be my intimate friend. I yeſterday received a letter from her, informing me of her misfortune, and deſiring my conſolation. She had written to me near three months ago, to announce her intended marriage, and to tell me, that a little temporary indiſpoſition of her future huſband alone impeded the conſummation of it; and I have never ſince heard from her till the letter in queſtion. I imagined that the arrangements, previous to ſuch a ceremony, had prevented her uſual attention to our friendſhip; or that ſhe waited, perhaps, to tell me

ſhe was happy in the poſſeſſion of the man ſhe loved. But I had not the leaſt ſuſpicion that your *Amelia* was my *Amelia*. Indeed, it occurred to me more than once to aſk your reaſon for not mentioning the name of the family with whom you were ſo intimately connected, and whoſe particular ſituation attracted ſo much of our mutual pity and attention; but, in the eager expreſſion of other ſentiments, the intention eſcaped me. She mentions you, *par hazard*, in a manner perfectly ſatisfactory to me; and her letter is not the leſs pleaſing on that account. However, to ſpare myſelf the trouble of repeating, perhaps imperfectly, what ſhe writes, I have encloſed a copy of the whole, without even ſuppreſſing her eulogium of me. As you have taken ſo kind a part in her welfare, and have been a witneſs to her afflictions, her own little relation of them cannot but be intereſting to you. You will ſmile, I think, at one part of her epiſtle—alas! ſhe little thought, when her pen

pen was buſy in deſcribing you, what an intereſt her friend had in the deſcription.

Amelia is a moſt amiable, accompliſhed, and ſenſible young woman; and if I were obliged to anſwer for the wiſdom of any one of my female acquaintance, I would be bound for hers in preference to all the reſt. You will ſee that ſhe makes no violent reſolutions, which, in her ſituation, are always ſuſpicious; and, from the general tenor of her language, I am apt to think ſhe will do more than ſhe profeſſes: a diſpoſition not very common to any of us when we labour under diſappointments, particularly thoſe of a certain claſs. But there is no dependence upon any thing in ſuch a world as ours: characters undergo ſuch ſtrange and unaccountable metamorphoſes, that there is no knowing where or on what to reſt. Was it, in the nature of things, for me to ſuppoſe the poſſibility of your black, ſombre mind being ſo converted as to make a funeral proceſſion the ſubject of

your rallery, and to convey your ridiculous ideas ſo forcibly to my fancy, as to render all my endeavours to ſuppreſs a laugh wholly impracticable? Indeed, your ſtory of the two hectical lovers, who cured each other, had put me into ſuch good-humour, as to prepare my mind for gay and lively impreſſions.

I am pleaſed with your journey to *Stourhead* on all accounts; the pleaſure you received there may be conſidered as a reward of your humane attentions to a moſt worthy family, who are not ungrateful: beſides, it is juſt ſuch a place as you ought to ſee. It would have been worth your making a long pilgrimage on purpoſe to viſit it. But I muſt forego the pleaſure of writing more to you at preſent; and I muſt deſire you not to write yourſelf till you hear again from me. We are going to pay a viſit of ſeveral days to one of our diſtant neighbours; and the firſt moment of my return ſhall be employed to inform you of it. In the

mean

mean time, my friend, take care of yourſelf, grow in health; encreaſe in ſpirits; amuſe yourſelf as your fancy dictates; and I charge you, above all things, to preſerve a mind at eaſe—a cheerful, contented ſpirit is all that my happineſs requires of you.

The incloſed letter.

To ———————.

I Little thought, my deareſt friend, that three long months would paſs away before your laſt affectionate letter ſhould receive my anſwer: but ſo it is; and I have now entered upon the career of unexpected ſorrow and diſappointment. The amiable and excellent young man, to whom I was to have been united, is no more. Soon after I wrote to you, his diſorder became ſerious: the Hot-Wells of *Briſtol* were preſcribed for him; and I was entreated by his mother and ſiſter, as well as by himſelf, to accompany them

thither. But I ſoon perceived that his caſe was beyond the remedies of this world; and I began immediately to prepare myſelf for the hour when he ſhould be taken to another. The fatal period at length arrived; and I had no other conſolation, at that awful moment, but the conſciouſneſs of having performed thoſe offices of attention towards him which became my ſituation, ſatisfied his affection, and, to the laſt moment, cheered his ſpirits and relieved his pains. He was a man to love and to lament. Indeed, it aſtoniſhes me, when I reflect on what I ſuffered, that I am now alive to tell you the ſtory of my misfortune: but I received all poſſible kindneſs and ſupport from his family; and, when he was gone, their whole attentions were transferred to me, and ſtill continue to be exerted with unremitted care and affection. I lay extremely ill for near a fortnight after Mr. ——'s death, but I now begin to recover; and, no ſooner did I find myſelf in

in poſſeſſion of ſtrength ſufficient to write to you as I ought, than I reſumed my pen, not to aſk your pity, for that, I well know, waits upon all misfortune, but to entreat your conſolation. Yes, I entreat it; becauſe I am not ignorant of your backwardneſs to do any thing which may appear to announce that ſuperiority of underſtanding and character which you have endeavoured to hide, in vain, from thoſe who know you as I do. What will be my future lot, I cannot pretend to determine; nor how this ſad event will operate upon my future conduct. I ſhall make no vows, nor declare any reſolutions, but leave myſelf to be governed by the ſtate of mind I may poſſeſs whenever I ſhall be recovered from the influence of that poignant regret which now embitters my life. I propoſe to paſs a part of the winter in town, when, I hope, we ſhall talk over this, and many other intereſting matters, together.

But, before I conclude, I am moſt particularly deſired by Mrs. —— to aſk you, if, by any chance, you know or have heard of a Mr. ——. He lodged in the ſame houſe with us at the Hot-Wells; and to him we are indebted for all the little comfort we had. He ſeemed, indeed, to have been directed thither by Heaven, to aid and conſole us. My poor Mr. —— admired and eſteemed him beyond meaſure. Indeed, we all bear the moſt ſincere reſpect and regard for him, and much it is the wiſh of this family to know ſomething about him, that, in the continuance of their friendſhip, they may take ſome occaſion to acknowledge, in a proper manner, their ſenſe of his worth, and their gratitude for his kindneſs. He is a young man of a pleaſing figure, elegant manners, and univerſal knowledge: he is a fine muſician, draws with great taſte, and has travelled through the principal countries of Europe, whoſe language he ſpeaks; but he ſeemed to poſſeſs a ſolitary

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and retired diſpoſition that did not ſuit with ſo much accompliſhment, and his powers of pleaſing. In ſhort, he was ſo obliging, attentive, and reſpectful to us all, that we all wiſh to know more of him. He was invited to accompany us home, but could not be prevailed upon to accept our invitation. It was impoſſible, at any time, to ſuffer curioſity to be impertinent on the ſubject of ſuch a man; but, under the circumſtances of our acquaintance, it was not thought of, nor did it ſuggeſt itſelf to us till ſome days after our arrival here. All that we can collect from what we remember of his converſation is, that he was ſeveral years a member of the Univerſity of Oxford. Perhaps it may be in your power to ſatisfy a curioſity which has ſuch a motive as ours. I wiſh you may; for he is juſt ſuch a man as I have heard you deſcribe in our little ſecret converſations together. Adieu, my dear friend! I cordially wiſh you every happineſs, and that you may never know

the

the afflictions which you are now called upon to ſoothe and conſole, by

Your moſt affectionate

AMELIA ——————.

LETTER THE THIRTIETH.

To Mrs. ————.

YOU cannot but expect ſuch a letter as this—Life is a burthen to me; nay, I live no more; for all that could give pleaſure, delight, and comfort to my life, is now in the arms of another. I was deſired not to write till I received her permiſſion: a month paſſed away, and no permiſſion arrived; at length, the very news-paper, which ſhe herſelf had ordered to be ſent me, tells the horrid tale, and explains too well the cauſe of her ſilence.

I do not aſk you why I was thus betrayed—that queſtion applies itſelf more naturally to another object; and the incloſed is written to direct ſuch an application.

cation. It is without addreſs, for I cannot write it: and I deſire you will not delay to forward it where you know it ought to go, with all expedition. If I thought it were poſſible for you to deceive me, in ſpite of my weak condition, I would ſet off the next moment to find her out; I would force myſelf into her preſence, and die at her feet. But I am already exhauſted, and can ſcarce hold my pen. I have only again to implore, that, in this important commiſſion, you will not betray me. Perform, I beſeech you, this act of friendſhip for me—another may not be in your power.

LETTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

To ———————.

MY hand trembles—my lips quiver—my eyes have ſcarce ſight ſufficient to guide my pen; while my thoughts are black as the ink with which they are written.

ten. In the name of mercy, what could be your motives for acting as you have done towards me? Revenge could not urge to the deed, for I never wronged you: cruelty could not be ſatisfied with treading out the life of a worm; nor could vanity be flattered by ſuch a captive as me. I was not in your way, but remained at an unaſpiring diſtance from you, and you took me to your friendſhip: I was ſinking into the grave, and you called me back to life, to tell me that you loved me, and that you would be mine, which was life indeed: and, in a moment, without preparation for the event, you conſign me to worſe than death. Why did you not ſtrike me at once into the grave? But that would have been an act of mercy, and your barbarous triumph would not have been ſatisfied—Though you will not long enjoy the pleaſure of my torments—the ſhock of the preſent hour, if it does not end my being, will ſoon deſtroy my reaſon. I ſhall either be ſafe from your cruelty in the tomb, or, if I live,

live, the yells of my frantic ſpirit will harraſs you with alarm. They may not reach your ears; but conſcience will waft them to your heart.

If it had pleaſed Heaven to have taken you, I ſhould have been reſigned to my fate; and my grief, ſevere as it muſt have been, would not have been without its mournful conſolation. I ſhould have adored your memory; I ſhould have viſited your tomb; I ſhould have fancied that your inviſible ſpirit would ſometimes leave the bowers of bliſs to have regarded and watched over me; I ſhould have held ſweet converſe with your ſhade; while Hope would have guided my penſive ſpirit through the gloomy valley of death to our eternal union in a better world. But to know that you live, and that you do not live for me; nay, to ſee you, as it were, in the arms of another, is more than I can bear. To make ſuch a barbarous ſport of me, is to practiſe the refined cruelty of vengeful ſuperſtition, which

which enhances the torments of the damned, by giving them, from amid their unconſuming fires, a proſpect into the realms of heaven.

My former griefs, as you were wont to tell me, were but the ſhadows of real ſorrow. Alas! little did I think, nay, how was it poſſible for me to ſuppoſe, that you would ever convince me of it, by making me ſo well acquainted with the ſubſtance. But, ſhadows as they were, they then oppreſſed me; and, in the hour of my complaint (ah! wherefore muſt I remember it?) how kindly did you counſel me; with what gentle accents did you ſoothe me; with what irreſiſtible eloquence did you perſuade me to forget my troubles, and repoſe upon your friendſhip! When, with no other deſign than to mark a reſpectful gratitude for your kindneſs, my enamoured heart dictated unawares the tender language of incautious paſſion, with what condeſcending goodneſs did you calm the fear of having offended; and how

how generouſly did you afford me excuſes to myſelf for the preſumptuous ideas I had addreſſed to you! When lurking diſeaſe began to make its approaches upon my health, and threatened to undermine the props of life, with what an anxious, forward zeal, with what a rare benevolence, did you propoſe, procure, and ſupport the means of my recovery! What tender ſolicitudes did you expreſs for my welfare! What an affectionate intereſt did you take in every thing that concerned me! What happineſs you diſcovered in being capable of adding to mine—till, as it then appeared, to ſoothe my troubled ſpirit, and remove thoſe anxious doubts, which, by harraſſing my mind, might impede my cure, you declared that you lived but for me, and commanded me, therefore, to live for you! From that moment I became a new creature; a cheerful, animated ſatisfaction, that I never experienced before, now poſſeſſed me wholly; health returned both to my body and

my

my mind; and I hugged my happineſs more cloſely to me, becauſe it came from you. But, in the very moment when, invited by your ſmiles, I purſued the bleſſing before me, the dæmon of deſpair, in your angelic form, arreſts me on the way, and, with his chilling touch, curdles all my hopes, and blaſts my every joy.

I am confounded with amazement, and loſt in miſery. To torment, for the mere pleaſure of tormenting, without any other object, can ſcarce exiſt in diabolic cruelty. To deceive, for the pitiful triumph of deceiving, is not, I ſhould hope, in human hypocriſy. My underſtanding faulters in the endeavour to reconcile your conduct, not only to yourſelf, but to any other example of folly, caprice, or wickedneſs. I would fain imagine, that, ſunk beneath the weight of ſome lethargic power, I ſtruggle in a gloomy dream of fantaſtic miſery. Alas! I am too much awake—you have deſtroyed my repoſe for ever—I ſhall ſleep no more!

I well

I well know the diſtance which the prejudices of birth and fortune have ordained between your lot and mine: but you elevated me to yourſelf; and I will not now deſcend to the idle humility of my former ſtate. Miſery has made me proud; reſentment gives me ſtrength; and the ſuperior virtue which your treaſon has made me feel that I poſſeſs, will keep my footing firm, till reaſon ſtaggers, or till life diſſolves.

It well became the wild inconſtancy of your cruel and capricious fancy to aſſociate Pagan rites with your connubial hour: but by what fatal ſuggeſtion did you fix on me to be the pampered victim whom you were to adorn with flowery garlands to aid the feſtive ceremonies of your deteſted nuptials? Think not that I rave; my reaſon ſtill holds its ſeat; your triumph is yet imperfect: this, indeed, is not a moment for the vain parade of image and fiction--but you well know, that, on the altar where you dared to plight

plight a faith that was not yours, my poor bleeding, broken heart was ſacrificed.

When I reflect on what I myſelf have been, I adore what you then was—when I feel what I am, I execrate what you now are—and when I conſider what I ſoon may be, I pity your future lot. Contrition and ſorrow are at the heels of your preſent joy. My pale image will ſoar with you to the higheſt pinnacles of fortune: if you retire to the moſt ſecret bowers of pleaſure, it will meet you there: it will aid the pangs of affliction, and ſtand between you and every conſolation. If you ſhould be a mother—— Gracious Heaven! for what end to myſelf, for what good in the general order of things, do you thus torment me? Alas! my tears mingle with the ink, and blot the paper—I do not wonder that I weep; theſe waters ſpring from the deepeſt fountains of my heart, and its exhauſted ciſtern has no blood to mingle with them—for I bid an eternal adieu to gentle virtue, chaſte

chaſte love, incomparable beauty, and the fair proſpect of the happieſt days. Oh, Heavens! But I muſt have done—the paſt is no more—clouds and darkneſs reſt upon the future. Adieu! I know not how either to curſe or to bleſs you---Once more farewel! The ſun cheers me not---the animating face of Nature does not revive me---but the ſurrounding ſcene preſents to my diſturbed imagination the means of repoſe---the rocks are high---the water is deep---and I am in deſpair!

LETTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

To Mr. — — —.

YOU have been in a moſt miſerable and melancholy error; and, if I were not certain that you had ſufficiently puniſhed yourſelf, I ſhould almoſt conſent to become a party in puniſhing you. Your friend, and ſuch an one as no man ever had

had before, is now recovering from a very ſevere illneſs, the conſequence of a fall from her horſe. The animal ſuddenly took fright, threw her againſt a tree, and cauſed a violent contuſion in her right arm: ſhe was taken up ſenſeleſs; and the report of the neighbourhood was, that ſhe was killed: indeed, it became ſo general as to reach a provincial printing-office, and was formed into a paragraph for a news-paper; but, either through the inattention of the printer, or ſome accidental circumſtance, two diſtinct articles, on very different ſubjects, changed their names, and, while a very amiable young lady, lately married, was announced as dead, your friend, who had narrowly eſcaped with life, was declared to be married. This idle miſtake was copied by the London papers, and, among the reſt, by that which is regularly ſent to you: but the error was immediately corrected, more on your account, I believe, than any other; and if you had waited

waited a poſt or two, you would have employed yourſelf better than in writing ſuch an hair-brained, mad, and ranting epiſtle, as we have received from you. But I hope your terrors have already been diſſipated, and that you no longer think of throwing yourſelf headlong from the rocks. I flatter myſelf that this letter will not be the firſt herald of your preſent mortification and returning happineſs. It is only for thoſe who know you to pity you. But I ſhall add no more. You will receive a letter at large from another quarter, as ſoon as the hand which is to write it will admit of that employment: in a few days it will find ſtrength ſufficient for the purpoſe. But, in the mean time, for I am now by her ſide, ſhe deſires me to aſſure you of her forgiveneſs, and that ſhe entreats you to forgive yourſelf.

I am, with real regard,
Your moſt ſincere friend,

LETTER

LETTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

To Mr. ——— ———.

I SHALL forgive you, my friend, if, on receiving this letter, your heart flutters, and your hand trembles; nay, you will receive my pardon, if, as you break it open, ſome chilling apprehenſions ſhould paſs acroſs your mind. But I will compoſe your agitated ſpirits, by aſſuring you, that your bitter epiſtle has had no other effect upon me, than to awaken in my breaſt a tender commiſeration for your ſufferings. I truſt, that this laſt ſevere experience is alone wanting to perfect your wiſdom, and that you will never again perplex me, or torment yourſelf, in vain.

After what has happened, and in the temper of mind which now poſſeſſes me, I feel myſelf diſpoſed to enter into a calm diſcuſſion of my thoughts, as they relate to my paſt conduct, my preſent ſentiments, and my future determinations.

Some

Some very ſingular circumſtances which happened in my own family; the excellent and reiterated counſels of a fond relation, now no more; and, as I am writing to you, I ſhall add, my own reaſon and reflection, all combined to impreſs my mind with unfaſhionable notions and determined reſolutions on the ſubject of marriage; the moſt important object of female life, and in which female happineſs is by no means duly conſidered.

In a review of this ſituation, and in an enquiry into the means which would beſt promiſe to produce the greateſt poſſible ſatisfaction in the poſſeſſion of it, it was natural for me to form a character in my own fancy, ſuited to my diſpoſition, that might ſerve as a kind of ſtandard, by which I might appreciate and meaſure the qualities of any occaſional ſuitor, and the means he poſſeſſed of rendering me happy.

I drew my figure, as you may ſuppoſe, beyond the line of human perfection; and

the very few confidential friends to whom, in an idle moment, I communicated my ideas, always treated me as a viſionary, chimerical creature, and did not heſitate to aſſure me that I ſhould never find the man my imagination had formed. I did not ſtand in need of ſuch information: but I made my model perfect, in order that I might form a more accurate judgment of ſuch objects as might be compared with it. All this may me conſidered as a pretty amuſing theory, fit only to employ the fancy of youthful imagination, and wholly inapplicable to the purpoſes for which it was eſtabliſhed. My experience tells me another tale; for the only difficulty in the buſineſs is not inſurmountable; which is, how to diſcover the real character of any perſon whom one might wiſh to examine by ſuch a ſtandard of perfection. The lover, it is true, dreſſes out his mind as well as his perſon; he is every thing that the object of his paſſion can wiſh him to be: her thoughts are his thoughts, her wiſh is a

law

law to him, and it is the object of his ſtudy to ſhape himſelf and his actions to her deſires. In this poſition, therefore, it is impoſſible to form an adequate judgment of his merit and character, or, indeed, any judgment at all; and it is owing to a want of that ſevere ſcrutiny which is ſo neceſſary on theſe occaſions, that the huſband and the lover are oftentimes ſuch different creatures. If there is no objection in point of family and fortune, there is not, in general, ſo much enquiry made about his qualities and diſpoſitions, as after the character of a ſervant whom you are about to hire. As for real difficulty in the buſineſs, there is none; a little patience, and a cool ſpirit of perſeverance, are all the requiſites to ſolve the problem of any character. What was his education—what is his temper—and, ſince he has been his own maſter, of what colour are his amuſements? of what perſons does he form his general ſociety, and who are his intimate friends? This knowledge once

obtained, and a very little trouble will acquire it, you have the general outlines of any man's character, and the clue by which you may deſcend into the labyrinth of his private virtues and failings. At this period, then, you may venture to compare him with your own model, and diſcover at once if he comes within ſuch a diſtance as to admit of cautious reception, or immediate acceptance; or whether he ought not to be rejected without the heſitation of a moment. The man of commerce, when a ſtranger applies to him for merchandize and credit, informs himſelf of the circumſtances and commercial character of the perſon who makes the application, and acts accordingly. The ſame conduct ſhould be purſued as preparatory to matrimonial contracts; where, if we are once deceived, there is little or no chance of indemnifying our loſs, and we become bankrupts in our happineſs; from which miſerable ſtate of Inſolvency nought but death can redeem us. I am

certain

certain that this idea is neither chimerical nor fooliſh; but mothers are, in general, ſo anxious to marry their daughters, and the young ladies themſelves ſo ſolicitous to be married, that; if the principal features of a connection are promiſing, trifling objections, as they are called, are overlooked and diſregarded, though it very often happens, that on ſuch trifles depend the moſt eſſential parts of connubial felicity. I will give you an example.

I am not certain, my friend, whether you know, by any means, that I have been demanded in marriage by ſeveral perſons, to whoſe rank, fortune, and age, there could be no objection. As I was always left to myſelf to determine finally upon theſe matters, I produced my model, qualified myſelf to make a juſt eſtimation of their perfections, and rejected them all. Nor would there have been many ſuch wretches as myſelf in the world, for the little time I ſhould then have remained in it, had I married any one of them. The

laſt of theſe perſonages, however, was moſt particularly recommended by thoſe to whoſe opinion I was more than diſpoſed to yield obedience. His exterior was all that could be deſired, his underſtanding above the common claſs, his manners amiable, and he was an object of univerſal eſteem among his acquaintance. He really came ſo near my model, as to make me wiſh that no diſcovery of mine might remove him from his poſition; but it was ſoon made known to me that he had an attachment to play, and that foible in his character determined me at once to refuſe his propoſals. I was blamed in this buſineſs by ſome of thoſe who loved me beſt. They flattered me with the aſſurance that I did myſelf injuſtice, in not ſuppoſing I was capable of eradicating one idle propenſity from his character; and conſoled me with their ſolemn opinion that I ſhould never find ſuch another. Experience, however, bears a favourable teſtimony to my conduct; for this gentleman ſoon afterwards

terwards made matrimonial propoſals to another lady, which were received without heſitation, and he loſt the greateſt part of his wife's fortune at the gaming-table, within a week after his marriage.

This kind of reaſoning, and this mode of acting, would be conſidered by ſome as an abominable affectation, and by others as a mark of that cold, unfeeling character, which knows not what the pleaſures of love are, and does not deſerve to know them. I am not, I muſt acknowledge, one of thoſe warm-complexioned miſſes, who fall in love firſt---find out all the tranſcendent qualities of the charming youth afterwards---marry him under theſe favourable impreſſions---and become miſerable for the reſt of their lives.

I know what love is; and I truſt that I ſhall one day prove my knowledge, by a right performance of its duties, and a real enjoyment of its unſullied comforts.

Les ſenſations ſont pour le plaiſir qui eſt une ſituation: le ſentiment eſt pour le bonheur qui eſt un état. But to return to my ſubject:

Experience now convinced me that my plan, however ſingular, was founded in reaſon, and that I had no right to expect connubial happineſs but by acting up to it; being well aſſured, that it requires more reſolution to be happy in marriage, than to preſerve contentment in a ſtate of celibacy. The time, however, at length arrived when my imaginary model was to meet with an original in the world: that original, my friend, is yourſelf; in whom, without entering into any particular deſcription, I diſcovered the counterpart of what my fond imagination had framed, and which, in the moment of my moſt ſanguine hopes, I never expected to find.

Two difficulties, however, now occurred; the one reſted with myſelf, which was, in caſe

caſe I ſhould inſpire you with a tender paſſion, of which, I will now tell you, I was vain enough not to have the leaſt doubt, how I was prepared to meet the general diſapprobation and frowns of the world, which would moſt aſſuredly wait upon ſuch a marriage as I propoſed. The other reſted with you; and that was, conſidering all circumſtances, how I ſhould influence your extreme modeſty and delicate ſenſibility to make the firſt advances in a buſineſs where it was impoſſible for me to make them myſelf.

I had been reſolved, ever ſince I was capable of forming a judgment upon the matter, as Heaven had bleſſed me with riches, not to make what is called fortune a neceſſary requiſite in an huſband. For high birth I had no very great partiality, unleſs united with great virtues: I had ſeen the puppet too near to be caught with its fallacious glare. Every quality that depends upon a good education was yours in an high degree: your mind, your manners, and accompliſhments, were

moulded and faſhioned to my wiſhes. As for ſcience, erudition, languages, and all that, you had ten times more than were neceſſary to my requiſition. Here you roſe far ſuperior to my model. But, above all, I diſcovered in you that ſenſe of honour, that inflexible integrity, and that exquiſite ſenſibility, which gives to the more robuſt virtues their faireſt ſhape and brighteſt colour. You anſwered in every thing to my wiſhes. There was ſomething, however, in the general diſapprobation of the world, which, though it did not endanger my determination, ſerved, for ſome time, to trouble it; but reaſon and reflection at length gave me courage, and I am now more than equal to a calm victory in ſuch a conflict. The firſt difficulty therefore was ſoon ſurmounted; and every thing combined in my favour to remove the ſecond. Your ſituation ſeemed to court the gentle offices of friendſhip, and it was in my power to exert them. Your mind poſſeſſed a degree of

ſenſibility

ſenſibility which would cauſe exertions of kindneſs to awaken feelings beyond thoſe of gratitude; while your vivid imagination, giving an irreſiſtible impulſe to thoſe feelings, hurried you, as it were, at once to my feet. At this period I did not aſk advice, for my reſolution was unchangeably determined; but I communicated my deſigns to our common friend, who, I believe, had long diſcovered them; and from that moment ſhe took a kind and active part in forwarding the plan I had in view. Your letters told me your thoughts, and my anſwers did not quite conceal mine. At length, your illneſs, amid all its alarms, afforded me the reaſonable opportunity of informing you, that I would one day unite my lot to yours. The happieſt moments of my life were thoſe in which I read your anſwer to that declaration.

Here then was the ſtate of our connection, when its tranquillity ſuffered a ſhort but ſevere interruption from a group of aukward

aukward circumſtances which do not merit a repetition. Indeed, I find, by three lines which Mrs. —— received from you this morning, that your error was diſſipated by the ſame authority which at firſt produced it, and that all your anger is turned from me upon yourſelf. I entreat that it may ſhortly exhauſt its force, and be forgotten with the original ſubject of it.

As for the different ranks of ſociety, about which ſo much is thought and ſaid, I have but one opinion: That virtue is equal to the higheſt rank--that manners make the man—and that diſputes about birth diſgrace the reaſon and common-ſenſe of mankind. My anceſtors may have quitted the plough-ſhare and the pruning-hook a century before yours, and there is all the mighty difference between us. In *China*, where ſuperior learning and virtue procure nobility, you would have been a noble of the firſt claſs. There is no rank to which ſuperior merit

and

and great talents may not aſpire; there is no honour which they do not deſerve. If I am proud to call you my friend, wherefore ſhould I diſdain to make you my huſband?

When we do not deſerve the cenſures of the world, what are they? If love is a crime, all mankind are involved in one common guilt. People may talk of mercenary love, but there is no ſuch thing: it is a contradiction in terms. Paſſion may be mercenary, but love cannot. It is a virtue of the firſt and nobleſt claſs; it only continues to animate the firſt and nobleſt minds; and cannot exiſt in an alliance with any baſe or illiberal paſſion. The attributes of love are the nobleſt qualities of the human mind; and that being, who preſerves them in all their purity, attains the utmoſt perfection of which our nature is capable. There is but little of it in the world, as there is but little virtue; there is no one, however, who does not feel, at ſome time or other, the pureſt flame of love,

love, as well as the nobleſt ſentiments of virtue: though the world does its utmoſt to corrupt them both, and too ſeldom fails of ſucceſs.

I know what I feel, and I am perſuaded, beyond all poſſibility of error, of that ſuperior excellence to which my feelings direct me. I ſhall, in due time, manifeſt an entire obedience to their impulſe; and the world may, if it pleaſes, once more laugh in vain. I ſhall conſent with the greateſt pleaſure to be a nine days wonder, if I do but ſecure my own felicity: I would rather meet the pity of mankind and be happy, than become the envy of it, and be miſerable. But my heart and my reaſon both aſſure me, that when I have once preſented you to the world, I ſhall not only be envied, but be happy alſo.

To be the ſlave of public opinion, is a moſt miſerable and diſgraceful bondage. A perverſion of the mind is brought about by nothing more effectually than by a thoughtleſs

thoughtleſs conformity to what is denominated the way of the world; which, by cauſing a relaxation of the principles inſtilled by education, urges us, by degrees, to a total deſertion of all rules, excepting thoſe of vogue and faſhion; and to deem nothing good or bad, but as it coincides with, or deviates from, the conduct of thoſe whom our puſilanimity qualifies with the title of our betters.

To affect an entire contempt of the world, is a folly; and to act in a perverſe oppoſition to thoſe common habits and cuſtoms which are in themſelves morally indifferent, is a moſt ridiculous foible; but to ſuffer our minds to be blindly guided, and our reaſonable happineſs to be governed, or even affected, by popular opinion, is a weakneſs, of which I had an early warning given me by thoſe who never ſuffered themſelves to be infected with it, and who maintained a ſuperior character, as they poſſeſſed a ſuperior happineſs to the end of their lives.

Without

Without conſidering the pleaſure as well as the duty of raiſing depreſſed virtue to the ſituation it deſerves, I ſhall obſerve, that the firm and fond attachment of an huſband is ſo eſſential to a woman's happineſs, as to make her eager after every opportunity of augmenting his motives to fidelity and affection; and gratitude, perhaps, may not be the leaſt powerful, as, in a good mind, it will ever be one of the moſt permanent among them. I have not, however, made this obſervation with a view to my particular ſituation, or from a deſign to inſpire you with ſentiments which I well know that you poſſeſs. Indeed, I do not mean to boaſt of any accidental advantage over you; for I ſhould not think any woman deſerving of her huſband's affection, however, ſhe may have meliorated his ſituation, if ſhe does not conduct herſelf after marriage with the ſame modeſt and unaſſuming demeanour, as if it had been his fortune to have elevated her.

I have,

I have, however, my rules of decorum, and I ſhall be governed by them. I do not fear the world's cenſures in a matter that relates entirely to my own happineſs, and wherein no law, ſocial or divine, will be offended by me; but I ſhould be fearful of myſelf, and begin to ſuſpect the purity of my own intentions, if, in a tranſaction of ſo much importance as that which is now meditated, I ſhould ſtray from thoſe principles which have hitherto rendered my conduct impervious to folly, and ſuperior to temptation. They ſtill keep me at a diſtance from you; but the ſpace daily leſſens, and the obſtacles to our near approach are continually melting away. I ſhall not welcome the day of perfect freedom and uninterrupted inclination with leſs rapture than yourſelf.

Thus have I unveiled to you the real ſtate of my mind, in which you will ſee every thing that ought to give compoſure to yours. You have ſo ſeverely puniſhed yourſelf for your want of confidence in me,

me, that you will never more repeat the folly. It will prove a profitable leſſon to you; and I truſt, that our mutual happineſs will find, if poſſible, an additional ſecurity from your late violent and idle ſuſpicions. One word more, and I have done. While you remain at *Briſtol* you will ceaſe to write to me. This prohibition does not ariſe from yourſelf, but from me: I have ſufficient reaſons for this arrangement, and you muſt ſubmit to it. You will continue your uſual and regular correſpondence with Mrs. ——, who will give us mutual information concerning each other. I ſhall endeavour to make my return to town earlier than I originally intended, for reaſons which I will give you leave to divine. Adieu! This deſultory letter has been a great effort of my preſent ſtrength; but it affords a moſt comfortable relief to my heart, and I hope it will communicate an equal degree of pleaſure to yours.

LETTER

LETTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

To — — — — — — — —.

Richmond, Thurſday Evening.

THE melancholy but poſitive declaration of the phyſicians, which I ſent you yeſterday on the return of the carriage, has been but too fully verified. I then entreated you to have no hopes, for there were none. Our friend is no more! He died as he lived, becoming his ſuperior character, and one who was beloved by you, which he conſidered, to the laſt, as the ſtamp of his merit.

He attempted to write to you; but finding he had not ſufficient ſtrength, he ordered a large ſheet of paper to be given him, when, having ſigned his name at the bottom of the laſt page, he deſired that you would fill the whole of it with ſuch a letter as you might wiſh he ſhould have

wrote

wrote to you, had he been able; and that, he knew, muſt be ſuch an one as would have been produced by his pen.

He was perfectly reſigned to his fate, under the idea that the happineſs you had deſtined for him was beyond the ſtandard of this world, and therefore could not be permitted. He ſaid, that he had always thought ſo; but that he had no doubt of its being perfected where ſupreme felicity would be in its natural poſition, and of eternal duration. He ſpoke of the viſion he had written to you, in one of his letters, again and again, and ſaid that it would now be completed—After a long interval of ſilence, he deſired me to tell you, that your name would be the laſt word he ſhould pronounce in this world, and the firſt he ſhould utter in heaven. He could articulate no more, and went off ſoon after. I ſtayed with him to the laſt, for reaſons which you will approve; and,

when

when I aſſiſted in compoſing his limbs, I found your picture, which he uſed to wear about his neck, graſped in his right hand.

I ſhall remain here till Sunday morning, when he is to be privately interred at an early hour. The good lady of the houſe where he lodged, and her whole family, are inconſolable for him, ſo entirely had he won their hearts. Her ſon is to attend him to the grave. The moment that office is diſcharged, I ſhall return to town and to you. The neceſſary attentions keep me up at preſent, and give me ſtrength; but I fear, when this melancholy buſineſs is over, that I ſhall begin to droop, and, inſtead of calming, increaſe the energy of your affliction. I am, with the moſt affectionate regard,

Your ſincere friend,

———— ————.

LETTER

LETTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

To Mrs. ———.

My dear friend, *Friday Evening*

I SHALL ſay nothing of what I feel—that is not to be expreſſed—but my moſt anxious wiſhes are employed for your return, as it is to you alone I can ſpeak on the only ſubject of my heart, for you alone know it. I will follow his example, and imitate his reſignation—but he is at reſt, and I am in torment.

I ſhall make no reſolutions. This may, indeed, be a moment for the wild projects of a diſturbed imagination, but not for the well weighed ſuggeſtions of ſober wiſdom: their hour, perhaps, will never come. Bring all his papers with you, and whatever bears any traces of him. My youth owes to you its beſt inſtructions; but another important taſk remains for you

you to perform; you muſt ſuſtain my riper years into life by your conſolations. Your friendſhip has always been neceſſary to my happineſs, it is now eſſential to my exiſtence. I do not wiſh you to return till every becoming office is performed for the firſt and beſt of men. I find a wretched conſolation in reading his letters, and particularly that in which his viſion is written. He has fulfilled his part of it —mine yet remains behind—yet a little while, and it will be accompliſhed!

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.